University of Alberta

The Nature And Intent Of Business Involvement In Cooperative Education Programs

by

Sandra Lee Miskiw ©

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in

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE NATURE AND INTENT OF BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT IN COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS submitted by Sandra Lee Miskiw in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration.

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This dissertation is dedicated

to my parents,

whose love and patience made it possible.

"The answer is simple:
if you want something very badly, you can achieve it.
It may take patience, very hard work, a real struggle, and a long time;
but it can be done . . .
faith is a prerequisite of any undertaking . . ."

-- Margo Jones

Abstract

There are currently two approaches to analyzing business involvement in education. First, there are those who welcome such programs; proponents of business-education joint ventures consist primarily of industrialists and those working in sectors which have close ties to business. Many supporters of business involvement in education believe that deficiencies in public education are the result of poor management practices and not inadequate funding; they do not agree with educators that more money necessarily translates into better education. Second, there are those who oppose such programs and resent creeping business intrusion into the education system. Opponents of business involvement in education consist primarily of members of the teaching profession who believe these programs are little more than a disguise for business to exert its control within the education system. Educators stress the need to increase resources to schools, and believe that generous financing is critical to a well-run educational system.

These two approaches as to why business wants to become more involved in the education system influenced the kinds of questions I asked when collecting the data for this study; my intention was to address perspectives from both business and education as part of the interviewing process. The group of participants included consisted of both former educators who successfully moved into the world of business, and business individuals who excelled in their particular sectors. The only thing which this study's participants had in common was, at the time of this study, ALL considered themselves to be "in business."

"The time of discipline began.
Each of us the pupil of whichever one of us could best teach
what each of us needed to learn."
-- Maria Isabel Barreno

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"One can never pay in gratitude;
one can only pay 'in kind' somewhere else in life."
-- Anne Morrow Lindbergh

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To my parents, Clarence and Alice Miskiw: Thank you for enabling me to realize my Grade Four dream of becoming a Ph.D., although at the time I had no idea what it would be in. I love you both.

"No trumpets sound when the important decisions of our life are made.
Destiny is made known silently."
-- Agnes DeMille

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Chapter 1

". . . we will be victorious if we have not forgotten how to learn."

-- Rosa Luxemburg

Introduction To The Study

> With the recent surge in business-education partnerships, educators need to understand what motivates business to become involved. . . . What has fuelled the recent explosion in business and education partnerships -- altruism or self-interest? (Reynolds, 1993, p.22)

Economic realities require that we be prepared to be lifelong learners. The challenge lies not in committing to this essential goal, but in figuring out how best to accomplish it. At issue is the following question: What are the best ways to ensure that all students (regardless of individual need or talent) and all educational institutions (regardless of wealth) have the opportunity to succeed?

We are all responsible for educating our young people and providing them with the skills, attitudes, and values that will enable them to succeed. This is not a matter of philanthropy so much as it is national, corporate, and personal self-interest. The role of business is to collaborate with education to arrive at a shared vision of the future which links economic strategies with humanistic ones. Canada's future depends on our ability to educate young people and re-educate workers to survive the demands of a changing market competing in a global economy.

Problem Statement

"Putting a question correctly is one thing and
finding the answer to it is something quite different."
-- Anton Chekhov

The purpose of this research study was to explore and describe the perspective and perception of business as to the nature and intent of its involvement in cooperative education programs. The objective was to develop an understanding of motives for employers' receptivity, involvement, and satisfaction with cooperative education at the post-secondary level. "We know much less than we should about employer motivation (or lack of motivation) to participate in [cooperative education] programs." (Lynn & Wills, 1994, p.11)

General Research Question

What does business perceive to be the nature and intent of its involvement in cooperative education at the post-secondary level?

Specific research questions. This study was guided by the following specific questions, all of which attempted to address the concept of motivation:

1. Why does business want to be involved in cooperative education programs?
2. What internal and external considerations influence corporate decision-makers to become involved in cooperative education programs?
3. Does business identify its goals as being short-term or long-term with respect to its involvement in cooperative education?

"All great reforms require one to dare a lot
to win a little."
-- William L. O'Neill

Justification For This Study

> Perceptions shape human attitudes and behaviors; their impact is pervasive and unavoidable. They provide bases for understanding reality -- objects, events, and the people with whom we interact -- and our responses to them. (Johnson, 1987, p.206)

Employers' perspectives are crucial to the success of cooperative education programs since the delivery of work-experience placements depends upon employers being willing and able to provide them. In addition, the form the cooperative experience takes is determined at least as much by the employer as by the post-secondary institution or the student. A unique feature of the cooperative experience is that, while it is a part of the curriculum, it is typically delivered outside of the direct supervision of educators; in cooperative education it is the employer who delivers the curriculum for a specified period of time. As expected, employers' perspectives are likely to be very influential in what happens during the placement period. It is therefore important to examine the motives of employers for participating in the cooperative education experience, issues related to these motives, and the role employers play in cooperative education.

The relationship between the basic institutions of education, work, and government need to be woven into a new pattern. Where there has been isolation, there must now be direct communication; where there has been suspicion and distance, there must now be trust and cooperation. This study is significant because "there are a number of inhibitors to [industry and education] working together, but chief among them is mutual suspicion and distrust." (Wilson, 1984, p.31) This study is significant because:

1. There has been much speculation and attribution of motive with respect to business involvement in public education; however, virtually no

research has focused on motive, even though it has considerable influence on the operations of educational institutions.

2. It may promote a sensitivity to the concerns of education and business regarding their involvements with one another.

3. It may stimulate mutual interest, trust, and respect between current and potential partners in education thereby promoting a growth in quality business-education alliances.

4. It may help reduce skepticism and tension between business and education by providing insight and understanding into the reasons why business wants to become more involved in the educational process.

Definition Of Terms

Business-education partnership: A mutually beneficial relationship between employers and educators designed to enhance the learning of students and other learners.

Joint venture: Formal arrangements between two or more separate entities involved in collaborative action to achieve mutual goals, share resources and capabilities, exploit potential synergies, or share risk.

Cooperative education: When students' academic programs are combined with a formalized work experience component with cooperating employers.

Business/industry: Commercial enterprises involved in manufacturing activities, that is, the production of goods and services. These interchangeable terms may also refer to the activities and value bases of Western industrial capitalism.

School: An educational institution wherein formal learning occurs, including kindergarten to post-secondary education levels.

Economics: The social science concerned with description and analysis of the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.

Motive: Pertains to a need or desire that causes an individual to act.

Nature: The inherent characteristics or basic constitution of a person or thing.

Intent: The state of mind in which an act is committed.

Perspective: The interrelations in which a subject or its parts are viewed mentally with respect to their true relations or relative importance.

Perception: An awareness interpreted on the basis of experience.

Collaboration: Relationships between organizations which involve sustained interactions between members of each organization and include joint efforts, and shared responsibilities and goals in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect.

Entrepreneur: An individual who organizes, manages, and assumes the risks of a business or enterprise.

Capitalism: An economic system characterized by private or corporate ownership of capital goods, by investments that are determined by private decision rather than state control, and by prices, production, and the distribution of goods that are determined mainly by competition in a free market.

Socialism: Any of various economic and political theories advocating collective or governmental ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods.

Liberalism: A political philosophy based on belief in progress, the essential goodness of man, and the autonomy of the individual and standing for the protection of political and civil liberties; a theory in economics emphasizing individual freedom from restraint and usually based on free competition, the self-regulating market, and the gold standard.

Limitations

The findings of this study were limited by:

1. The perspectives and experiences of those individuals whose corporate organizations had experience with cooperative education programs. These individuals tend to be advocates for such collaborative arrangements. The literature indicated that opponents of such arrangements do exist, however, the perceptions of such individuals were not represented in this study.

2. The purposive selection of participants limited the generalizability of the study's findings. However, the transferability of findings is good since every effort was made to select organizations that were typical of their sector.

3. The study was limited by the fact that data collection relied on the perceptions of participants, and depended upon their willingness to share their opinions accurately and sincerely.

4. The study was limited by the extent of their knowledge and the ability of participants to recall their experiences and articulate them succinctly.

5. Due to its qualitative approach to data collection and the volume of data generated, I had to decide what to include and what not to include in the reporting of this research study's findings. It is conceivable that I may therefore have overlooked some information which may have added to the comprehensiveness of the study.

Delimitations

This study had the following delimitations:

1. It included 15 Chief Executive Officers or Presidents selected from Western Canada, of which 14 had head offices located in Alberta, and one whose head office was located in British Columbia.

2. All participants' employing organizations were or had been involved in cooperative education programs at the time of this study.

3. Participants were selected from 13 different business sectors.

4. Data gathering was limited to a four month time-frame and took the form of one structured and one semi-structured interview with each participant.

5. The interviews were conducted with the Chief Executive Officers and Presidents of organizations representative of their business sector. In all cases initial contact was made by requesting the name of the individual having primary involvement in and responsibility for the company's cooperative education program. In all cases I was put in contact with the CEO or President of the company.

Assumptions

This study was conducted on the basis of the following assumptions:

1. That participants are capable of reporting their perceptions accurately and in a trustworthy manner.

2. That participants possess the necessary information required for the purposes of this study, and that they have shared this information with me, including that information which is critical of business-education collaborations.

3. That structured and semi-structured interviews, combined with descriptive accounts, document analysis, and the use of a journal were

appropriate methods for the purposes of this study.

4. That the chosen methods of data analysis accurately reflect a trustworthy description of participants' perceptions.

5. That data obtained using the interview process are reliable.

6. That frequency of themes arising during the interview process is an indication of their validity.

7. That cooperative education programs provide a positive contribution to business, education, and the student, as well as other stakeholders involved.

8. That this study has contributed to the field of knowledge which pertains to industry-education relations, specifically cooperative education programs.

My Assumptions Prior To This Study

It is fair to say that I felt a study of this nature desperately needed to be conducted; somebody *had* to interview respresentatives of business in order to report their perspectives and perceptions of their involvements in cooperative education programs at the post-secondary level. While the literature reportedly favoured such involvement, educational practitioners did not. Since there did not appear to be any research pending in this area (either in the literature or by an academic colleague) wherein a researcher was interested in listening to the "competitive-corporate ideology of the right wing" (Barlow & Robertson, 1994, p.vii), i.e., business, I felt I had to conduct this study or it may not be done. With my educational and experiential background in business, and my graduate studies in Educational Administration, I felt my exposure to both sectors provided me with an advantage of having some understanding of the concerns expressed by both educators and industry representatives.

Since I was going to be interviewing the CEOs and Presidents of successful companies, I assumed I would hear an accurate portrayal of their actual and intended involvements in education. Also, it is fair to concede that I had a preconceived notion that business was willingly gratuitous, with education being the fortunate benefactor of this gratuity in its dealings with business.

Finally I thought that, as a representative of business and of the university, I may be the individual who could assist both sides in a better understanding of the other. The first step in this endeavor was to talk to business respresentatives; the second was to present what they told me to academia.

Organization Of The Dissertation

Chapter 1 provided an introduction and background to the study. The justification for this study, definition of terms, limitations, delimitations, and assumptions of the study were also included in this chapter.

Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature on business involvement in education, cooperative education, and their historical developments in Canada and the United States. The forms these alliances have taken, and the benefits and challenges they have experienced, are reviewed; also discussed are the more salient issues surrounding cooperative education programs and industry-education partnerships.

Chapter 3 describes the research design and research methods used to collect and analyze the data in this study.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 report the presentation and analysis of data collected in this study on business involvement in education.

An overview of the study, a summary of key findings, implications, and suggestions for further research arising from the findings of my study are presented in Chapter 7. My personal reflections regarding the study and its completion are also included at the end of this chapter.

It is worth mentioning that a personal objective I had for this dissertation was that it be written in an engaging format by injecting a measure of the creative and unique as the opportunity presented itself. I wanted to make this study readable and as interesting for others as it was for me, while maintaining dissertation format requirements.

"Imagination has always had powers of resurrection
that no science can match."
-- Ingrid Bengis

Chapter 2

"Toleration is the greatest gift of the mind."
-- Helen Keller

Review Of Related Literature

The most fundamental parallel that exists between leaders in business and leaders in education is a shared vision of the post-industrial learning environment. Reduced government funding has prompted educators to turn to industry for assistance in enhancing the education of young people and other learners (Bloom, 1995). In an attempt to improve the calibre of future workers, industry groups have become involved in a variety of programs with public education. Such collaboration is seen as a partial solution to education's fiscal, management, and curricular problems; however, these programs must contend with the obstacles endemic to joint efforts between organizations, in particular, the uncertainty about one another's motives for partnering. In addition, business involvement is becoming more complicated as the education system responds to changes in Canada's economic and social environments.

Why Partner?

Partnerships, one of the oldest forms of business activity, take a variety of forms, and are entered into for many reasons. According to Collins and Doorley (1991), partnerships are "rooted in cold necessity. No company makes a strategic alliance with another unless it has to -- that is, unless it can achieve its strategic objectives more effectively, at lower cost or with less risk, than if it

acted alone." (p.11) However, organizations are becoming more collaborative, egalitarian, and flexible in nature; organizations of all types are discovering how other people and institutions can help them achieve both individual and shared goals in a mutually beneficial manner. These are structures in which individuals view themselves as part of a whole complex system, structures in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. "Partnerships really can change the way people work together and the way they perceive each other. . . . Partnerships offer a great potential as a humanizing and ultimately liberating force in our society." (Bergquist, Betwee, & Meuel, 1995, p.xix)

Unlike other forms of organization, partnerships involve the formation of relationships between entities, individuals, or corporations while maintaining independence; they are often formed in order to produce a specific product and/or service, or to accomplish a mutually agreed upon goal. Such a system includes a non-hierarchical structure, a collaborative-based culture, and a relatively equitable distribution of authority and power among participants. An advantage of partnership arrangements is that they allow both organizations to share in a product and/or service not available to them as separate entities.

The very nature of this marriage between higher education and business has changed the post-secondary educational climate; colleges and universities now recognize that the business community is both the benefactor and end consumer of their product, and that basic economic principles cannot be divorced from education.

Why Now?

Why, at this time in history, have individuals and organizations world-wide found partnerships appealing enough to turn away from familiar structures

that have been, at the very least, satisfactory for so many years? Bergquist, Betwee, and Meuel (1995) identified six reasons:

1. In an age of limited and decreasing resources, partnerships offer expanded capabilities, allowing organizations to do more with less, or to do something entirely different than their existing resource bases would permit (p.11).

2. In an age of turbulent change and shifting boundaries, partnerships enable companies to be more flexible, to leverage competencies and share resources, and to create new ventures that would have been inconceivable on their own (pp.11-12).

3. In an age of growing complexity, partnerships offer convenient access to specialized resources (p.13).

4. In an age of increasing globalization, partnerships offer an extended geographical reach into diverse global markets, allowing for approaches that customize strategies to suit local markets and individual consumers (p.14).

5. Since technology promotes independent and often impersonal work, partnerships satisfy our basic human need for community by formally recognizing our interdependence on others (p.16).

6. In an age of growing egalitarianism, partnerships offer the chance for increased personal involvement, control, and professional fulfillment (p.17).

Collins and Doorley (1991) stated that growing internationalism, increasingly complex technology, and rapid technological change are responsible for the developing role of strategic partnerships.

> There is no longer enough time to rely on one's own resources to produce new products. No company has a monopoly on good ideas and, to remain successful, multinationals must be prepared to use strategic partnerships to acquire the best [people], technology and products from outside (p.6).

These trends are pervasive, unrelenting, and mutually reinforcing. Globalization is having a major impact on the way business is conducted; the number of joint ventures is increasing in an effort to provide companies with the economies of scale and international reach they require in order to remain competitive. Growing internationalism has resulted in "societies . . . becoming more and more knowledgeable about one another and more similar in patterns of consumption, enabling companies to sell similar products in different parts of the world." (Collins & Doorley, 1991, p.5) Increasingly complex technologies make it less likely that a single organization will have all skills and technological resources to sustain the levels of research and development required to stay competitive. Combining complementary technologies and sharing risks are major incentives for the formation of strategic partnerships, as is the speed of innovation. New technologies and successful products are quickly copied by rival companies, with the management of innovation the focus in a battle for market share.

A fundamental change in how we derive meaning and circulate information has also transformed our personal and work lives. Knowledge has become a form of currency and a new source of capital, while technological advances generate a knowledge-based revolution. The new global context has become an expanded framework for defining the world and presents some tough challenges to our public education system.

Education Is Everybody's Business

"Education is increasingly everybody's business. It is no one's monopoly." (Conway, 1990, p.3)

> A country's performance in the global game does not begin with its corporations. Rather, it begins in the mind-sets of its people -- how people are taught to think, to deal with one another, to work together. In other words, the race begins in school. The first clues to what makes a nation tick -- its distinct core values -- can be seen in how children are educated. A society transmits its bedrock values through the upbringing of its young people (Smith, 1995, p.100).

Experimentation and growth characterized the economy of the 1980s. In North American business, mergers and acquisitions increased in number and in size, with government deregulation and junk-bond financing making large-scale takeovers possible. Takeovers were made possible by a fundamental shift in societal values wherein high levels of debt were acceptable as we focused our attention on competitiveness, and government regulation was seen as a cause and not a solution to economic problems. The 1990s brought about a reassessment of values and it is now believed that hostile takeovers breed social problems, high debt levels are irresponsible, junk-bond financing is unethical, and government regulation is necessary to prevent excesses that result from private greed. The new game of global competition has shaken up the world's old economic order by challenging North American economic supremacy, particularly that of the United States. As North America begins to readjust, millions of citizens are being left behind.

Mistaken or outdated thinking afflicts business and education alike as their problems and dilemmas reflect the problems and dilemmas of the society in which they operate; new strategies must be adapted in order to lead the way

to positive solutions for society as a whole. There is the need to build alliances between elements of society which have been, at best, arm's length in the past, e.g., management and labor, government and industry, education and business. This challenge requires disparate forces to work together to ensure that schools deliver a world-class education to young North Americans who are the foundation of our economic future. The priorities and values of economic, educational, and governmental leaders are being tested as goals shift from the short-term to long-term; in education, as in economics, it is the long-term that matters. Since its citizenry is our nation's most valuable asset, it is in their education that corporations and government should invest. "The future now belongs to societies that organize themselves for learning. . . . Our most formidable competitors know this." (Marshall & Tucker, cited in Smith, 1995, p.126)

Most stakeholders in education would agree that the costs of poor education are high. We are all responsible for educating the young and providing them with skills, knowledge, and values that will enable them to succeed. Again, this is not a question of philanthropy, but rather a matter of personal, corporate, and national self-interest. As partners in education, parents, teachers, business, and government must provide learning opportunities for students since Canada's future depends on our ability to train youngsters and re-train workers to meet the demands of a continually changing economy. Business' role in this process is to help education define a vision which links people strategies with economic strategies in the preparation of our future workforce (Bloom, 1995).

Corporations want to be involved in providing satisfactory public education without usurping the role and responsibility of government. They

want to make a difference by creating business-education partnerships that extend beyond localized, fragmented, and episodic relationships and the resultant short-term efforts which fail to reap sustained benefits. For industry it is more than just a matter of handing out money:

> Education is a top issue for business, not only because it relates to the quality and productivity of the workforce and the competitiveness of American industry, but because it is the single most important factor in fighting poverty, homelessness, drug addiction and crime (Townley, 1989, p.3).

While money alone is not the answer, it is still required. Given national and provincial budget deficits, business may be required to increase its financial investment in public education. Education may be expensive, but the cost of ignorance is cataclysmic. However, business has more to offer education than just financial support; some of the best schooling today is provided by business. Clendenin (1989) differentiated between "schooling" and "education" and stated that "the purpose of education far exceeds the scope of [business'] schooling, which normally has a very tight focus." (p.8) Clendenin reported that much of the schooling provided by business is excellent, and that wherever possible we should put it to use within the larger arena of education. Clendenin stated that business currently faces a "paradox of imperatives," in other words, urgency and patience. There is a sense of urgency because problems encountered in education threaten our social and economic well-being. Patience must be exercised because these same problems are rooted deeply in the maladies of society at large and cannot be resolved by piecemeal efforts; while they may be alleviated by incremental improvements, they cannot be adequately corrected without fundamental reform (Clendenin, 1989).

Industrialists compare the rate of change in education with that of technology and commerce. By definition, business transacts change on a daily basis, trying to keep ahead of an unrelenting pace; however, few individuals would suggest that the rate of change in education has been unrelenting. There are risks associated with fundamental change, but maintaining the status quo is also a risk -- a risk which translates into millions of young people having little chance to succeed in the workforce unless changes take place. Without economic support there is no social justice; individuals lacking the skills to work in the evolving jobs created by a rapidly changing technology will have few opportunities available to them. Our collective fate is determined by their individual fates, and it is in everyone's best interest for all to succeed. Under the current system many will not (Clendenin, 1989).

Most educators and industrialists do not believe that the major purpose of schools is to support the economy. What business does believe is that the economic environment -- including industry, government, and a supporting infrastructure of services -- is vital to all citizens, as it provides for our existence and dominates both our work and personal lives. Its place in educational curriculum can be argued based on the assertion that if schools are educating young people and preparing them to be life-long learners, and if large areas of life are dominated by economics, then it follows that education must take the business world seriously (Clendenin, 1989).

Business-Education Partnerships

"If politics may be broadly defined as 'the way we are with each other,' then anything that affects how we connect with each other is political."
-- Phyllis Jane Rose

There are three commonly cited reasons for the increasing involvement of business in public education. First, both educators and industrialists are uneasy about the difficulties experienced by young people as they make the transition from school to work. Second, as inflation-related financial difficulties continue, both educators and business people worry about the effective and efficient operation of public education. Third, both education and business have suffered significant declines in public confidence -- education for disciplinary problems and a lack of emphasis on basic skills, and business for its impersonality and excessive profits. These shared concerns point to the mutual benefits of strong business-education relations.

What Does Business Want From Education?

According to the literature, business wants education to provide the following: (a) discipline in the formative years; (b) more emphasis on the basic skills of reading, writing, and computation; (c) the ability to adapt to rapid change in our increasingly complicated and technical society; (d) the inclusion of parents, industry, and labor groups in educational policy formation; (e) effective programs for students who do not complete post-secondary education; (f) learning opportunities outside of formal educational structures so that students will be less isolated from the "real" world;
(g) fair and realistic measurements of school outputs in human rather than statistical terms; and (h) accountability for student results (Chaffee, 1980).

There are three primary reasons why business wants to be involved in education: (a) corporate citizenship -- business considers its work with schools to be one way of discharging its public service responsibilities; (b) financial investment -- local taxes are a significant cost of doing business, therefore industrialists are interested in getting the best possible return on their education tax dollars; and (c) supply of employees -- industry requires a reliable and steady supply of well-educated employees (Chaffee, 1980).

Currently there are four ways that business may become involved in education: (a) *collaborative activities that directly or indirectly involve students*, typically in career preparation or in economic and/or citizenship education (e.g., Adopt-A-School programs, Junior Achievement, internships, and work-study arrangements), (b) *cooperative efforts to assist schools or school districts which do not involve students* (e.g., management studies courses, staff development, assistance with budget preparation, and long-range planning), (c) *involvement by representatives from business* as members of boards, committees, task forces, or advisory groups at local, provincial, and federal levels, and (d) *education-related activities by business without the cooperation of a school or school district*, although individual educators may be involved. Examples of this would include corporate training programs, tuition assistance for employees, and corporate "freebies" (e.g., instructional aid materials) (Chaffee, 1980).

> [Educational institutions] that become isolated from the rest of the community become isolated from the knowledge of what it takes for youth to participate in those other institutions, from how employing establishments view the developed abilities provided by the schools, from the resources throughout a community for enriching and extending the educational process, and from the reserve of good will potentially existing for furthering educators' objectives, recently buffeted by public discontent and criticism. (Chaffee, 1980, p.9)

To suggest that business' motives with respect to education are purely philanthropic would be naive. Clearly, motive varies between employers and is frequently vague or ill-defined. However, Watts (1991, p. 138) has identified seven possible reasons for business wanting to become involved in educational programs: (a) social contribution, (b) community involvement, (c) employee satisfaction, (d) educational influence, (e) publicity, (f) recruitment, and (g) labor power.

Cooperative Education: A Work-Education Joint Venture

Cooperative education is correctly perceived as "a non-zero sum game of the win-win-win type; through their participation in cooperative education, students, employers, and educational institutions all enjoy recognized benefits." (Sadlowski, 1996)

Society and the quality of life it engenders is shaped by the twin forces of work economics and education. The primary function of work is the production of goods and services; the primary function of education is to produce an enlightened, knowledgeable, and competent citizenry, which includes a prepared workforce. The manner in which each of these institutions fulfills its function is key to a healthy and strong society.

In North America, work and education have developed independently. Most individuals view their experiences of education and work as distinct and isolated phases in their lives, yet it is apparent that the forces of economics and education cannot be separated; productivity and education, and the corporation and academy are interdependent. Educational institutions have always sought to validate their programs of study through the corporate employment of their products; as well, the corporation has turned to education for its technical,

managerial, and professional workforce. The very reason for the relationship between higher education and business has changed the post-secondary climate: colleges and universities are willing to concede that the business community is both benefactor and end-consumer of their products, and therefore economic principles cannot be divorced from education. "The primary interaction between [education] and industry is the supply of high level human resources to industry." (Wilson, 1984, p. 31)

The interdependence of work and educational institutions has been long recognized by corporations and education, and has motivated efforts by policy makers to enhance their combined effectiveness by promoting linkages between them. Cooperative education was initiated in America in 1906 in response to the idea that educational outcomes would be strengthened if education included programmatic linkages with business (Wilson, 1984).

> Certainly there are a number of inhibitors to this working together, but chief among them is mutual suspicion and distrust. Not uncommonly, industry views colleges and universities as producers of overly theoretic, impractical and unprepared graduates who must be trained before they are productively employable, as unresponsible or as agonizingly slow to respond to human resource needs and as sometimes narrowly arrogant, wanting corporate money for curriculum development but no advice. On the other hand, educators often regard employers as seeking short term solutions to problems, as gauging decisions too much by the profit motive and as pirating their technical and science staffs. . . . The fact remains, however, these two institutions of society with their individual developmental histories, their unique purposes and their distinctive cultures are, nonetheless, interdependent. (Wilson, 1984, p. 31)

While the specific reasons business and education have for establishing cooperative joint ventures may differ, their needs are clearly compatible. The efforts of one sector to relate to the other are due to a reciprocal scarcity of resources, with the fulfillment of needs and solutions to problems being

obtained through cooperative efforts.

Business-Education Partnerships Benefit Everyone

The traditional view of business-education partnerships, whereby business supplied schools with resources and schools made use of those resources as they deemed appropriate, is no longer true in the most successful partnerships. The new role business plays in education is that of full partner and may therefore claim the following benefits: (a) enhanced corporate image, (b) greater community visibility, (c) observe how tax dollars prepare students for the future, (d) develop a better understanding of challenges faced by education, (e) employees derive personal satisfaction from assisting in the development of productive citizens, and (f) preparation of future employees. Through its involvement with business, education can claim the following benefits: (a) greater opportunities for students to learn about careers, the economy, and real-world applications of academic subjects, (b) improved student attitudes and attendance records, (c) external input for curriculum development, and (d) supplemental learning resources, particularly human resources and expertise, to enhance textbook knowledge. (Hall, 1993, p. 2)

Barriers To Business-Education Partnerships

"I can stand what I know.
It's what I don't know that frightens me."
-- Frances Newton

Position differences. There is a mutual mistrust between the education and business sectors. Educators criticize industry for being too short-sighted and self-interested in matters of education; they claim that business is

concerned only with profiteering, and that it lacks commitment to long-term social concerns. Educational practitioners accuse business of wanting to turn post-secondary schools into technical/trade institutions which have little regard for the necessity of a broad-based educational experience.

Industry leaders, on the other hand, claim that educators' perceptions of them are based largely on misconceptions. Industry executives support the need for a broad educational experience at the post-secondary level, and support an academic curriculum for students of all ability groups; business knows that because job skills change rapidly, workers must be flexible and have the ability to adapt and learn quickly.

There is also a clash of values between the "bottom line" mentality of corporations and the service-oriented human relations perspective characteristic of the education system, and this often makes it difficult for each to relate to the other.

Another reason it may be difficult for business and education to interact easily is that they are at very different points in their respective histories: educational enrollments, test scores, and financial support are alleged to be declining, while corporations, particularly those involved in high technology, are the current success stories of the North American economy.

> With one institution on the upswing and the other "in a dismantling mode,". . . it is hardly an atmosphere conducive to harmonious relations. True partnerships are difficult to establish when one of the partners is perceived as being more powerful and more successful than the other. (Useem, 1986, p.111)

Differences in management and political philosophy. Many industrialists believe that deficiencies in public education are the result of poor management practices and not insufficient funding; they do not agree with

educators that more money necessarily translates into better education. Business leaders are not alarmed by educational budget cuts or the laying-off of educators since budget cuts and layoffs are a fact of corporate life. Meanwhile, educators perceive business to be cold and uncaring when they attempt to enlighten industry about the financial and social difficulties currently faced by public education.

While business is more aware of the increased need for resources and funding by educational institutions, there is still some sentiment that schools are not only undersupported, but underproductive as well. As a result, some business support has been contingent on various kinds of educational reform, such as merit pay and more rigorous evaluations of teaching performance. Corporate leaders have singled out teaching unions as a major obstacle to effective school management; this is not surprising considering that industry is typically private and non-unionized. While teachers and administrators stress the need to increase resources to schools, business emphasizes the importance of changes to school organization and management.

Industrialists and educators also differ in their philosophies on the role of government. Corporate leaders tend to be entrepreneurial and conservative, believing that government, particularly at the federal level, should be limited in its scope and function. Educators espouse more liberal views on the role of government, and believe that generous financing at all levels is critical to a properly run education system.

Organizational differences. Corporations operate in a competitive environment under intense pressure to get new and improved products into the market. Rapid technological change, frequent modifications to company organization (acquisitions, alliances, mergers), unpredictable workforce needs,

and constant fluctuations in the market necessitate short-term planning cycles. This is in sharp contrast to the stability of schools which tend to operate and forecast based on long-range five-year planning cycles. These different temporal perspectives inhibit the development of ties between the two sectors, and it is not surprising that each becomes frustrated with the pace at which the other would like them to operate.

Summary. There is an undercurrent of cynicism in the comments of many involved in efforts to bring business and education closer together. A balance needs to be found, one in which education and business interact to achieve mutual goals in specific areas, but one also characterized by separate and distinct goals, organizational configurations, and financial structures. Ideally business and education would pursue parallel but separate paths, intersecting only in specific areas wherein employers provide expertise and resources that are unavailable from public sources. Bloom (1995) eloquently summarized the current ethos surrounding business-education partnerships:

> Business-education partnerships have their share of problems. One difficulty is that they are an uncertain quantity for many people. While thousands of educators, business people, government officials, parents, union representatives and community members across Canada are active and enthusiastic partners, uncertainty about one another's motives and actions is still common. This uncertainty is a stumbling block to enhancing the success of existing partnerships. Moreover, it slows down the creation of new partnerships. (p.1)

Impetus For This Study: Business' Critics

"We want the facts to fit the preconceptions. When they don't, it is easier to ignore the facts than to change the preconceptions."
-- Jessamyn West

"Schoolchildren are the largest untapped consumer market in our society; the public-education system is the largest public enterprise still to be privatized." (Barlow & Robertson, 1994, p. 83)

My numerous conversations with board members, superintendents, principals, and teachers revealed a passionate opposition on the part of educators to business involvement in education. As I began my preliminary literature review it came as a total surprise that the majority of literature supported business involvement in public education, citing the many benefits of such collaborations. I was left to wonder how it was possible that business-education partnerships had earned such favor in the literature but such opposition by educational practitioners. However, this preliminary literature review had revealed the study's first finding: proponents of business-education partnerships base their arguments on the short-term consequences of such involvement, while critics argue against them for reasons rooted in a long-term perspective. Critics question whether or not business commitment to education extends beyond students' appeal as an "untapped consumer market."

At this time, I have decided to focus on what critics were saying in an attempt to understand whether business was motivated by altruism or self-interest with respect to its involvement in public education. Critics maintain that while some corporate leaders may have a personal sense of philanthropy to the community or the less privileged, "the business of business is to make money." (Barlow & Robertson, 1994, p.78) "Presented with the threat of global competition, we are told that we no longer have a choice, that the only question

worth debating is how best to adapt to the primacy of the markets." (Barlow & Robertson, 1994, p.vii) Four of the most ardent critics of business involvement in education are Maude Barlow and Heather-jane Robertson (1994) and David Berliner and Bruce Biddle (1995). These critics addressed many educational issues, however, I will focus only on their criticisms of corporate involvement in education.

Canada's Maude Barlow And Heather-jane Robertson

"Zeal is the faculty igniting the other mind powers
into the full flame of activity."
-- Sylvia Stitt Edwards

Since it was Barlow and Robertson's (1994) Class warfare: The assault on Canada's schools which sparked my zeal for this study, a brief overview of their positions is necessary. Barlow and Robertson begin their critique by stating, "under the guise of 'reforming' or even 'supporting' schools, there is a great deal of activity in education advancing the interests of the competitive-corporate ideology of the right wing." (p.vii)

> North America's corporations have three fundamental goals for their preoccupation with and investment in North America's schools. The first is to secure the ideological allegiance of young people to a free-market world view on issues of the environment, corporate rights and the role of government. The second is to gain market access to the hearts and minds of young consumers and to lucrative contracts in the education industry. The third is to transform schools into training centres producing a workforce suited to the needs of transnational corporations. (Barlow & Robertson, 1994, p.79)

With regard to ideological allegiance. Competing economic models are being debated worldwide, and are frequently characterized simply as "job creation" versus "deficit reduction." The role of education is to cultivate

students' critical faculties in order to assess proposed solutions and competing ideological positions of the various economic models presented to them, (i.e., to teach students to think critically).

> However, the system's ability to remain impartial and open-minded has been compromised as cash-starved schools all over North America have accepted corporate donations in money and materials. . . . What is, in effect, a special-interest perspective is presented as fact, and when it is taught in the classroom, it has the added weight of the system to give it legitimacy. (Barlow & Robertson, 1994, pp.79-80)

Barlow and Robertson claimed that when explaining to students how the market economy works, business presents free enterprise theory as a natural law of economics; they believe that this undermines education's ability to teach students to think critically about economic issues, and "smacks of the kind of indoctrination we so rightly criticize in totalitarian states." (1994, p.80)

With regard to gaining access to new markets. Advertising to young people has increased at an exponential rate, with purchasing decisions which were once made by parents now being made by families or children (Barlow & Robertson, 1994). Corporations target young people and rely on peer pressure and manipulative marketing to build consumer allegiance to their products. "The goals of brand identification and product loyalty are particularly offensive -- and convincing -- when the companies cloak their promotion in some form of educational good" (Barlow & Robertson, 1994, p.84), such as when McDonald's sponsors a school program on nutrition wherein the "Big Mac" is presented as representing all four food groups.

With regard to raising the future workforce. Students currently face high unemployment, job insecurity, and increased competition for jobs. Education is being portrayed as a competitive advantage and has reverted to one of its

traditional functions in society -- a way of sorting individuals at a time when there is an overabundance of qualified young people in a dramatically shrinking workforce. Students "are encouraged to see education not as part of a whole life, but as an edge in the job search." (Barlow & Robertson, 1994, p.88) Educational institutions are preparing our students for this reality by teaching values and skills compatible with the perspective of individual competitiveness, individual responsibility, and loyalty to corporate policy. Noble (1992) stated,

> Above all, high-tech corporate interest in education reform expects a school system that will utilize sophisticated performance measures and standards to sort students and to provide a reliable supply of such adaptable, flexible, loyal, mindful, expendable, "trainable" workers for the twenty-first century. This, at bottom, underlies the corporate drive to retool education and retool human capital. (cited in Barlow & Robertson, 1994, p.89)

America's David C. Berliner And Bruce J. Biddle

> American education has recently been subjected to an unwarranted, vigorous, and damaging attack -- a Manufactured Crisis. Early in the 1980s, prominent figures in our federal government unleashed an unprecedented onslaught on America's schools, claiming that those schools had recently deteriorated, that they now compared badly with schools from other advanced countries, and that as a result our economy and the future of our nation were seriously threatened (Berliner & Biddle, 1995, p.343).

While Barlow and Robertson (1994) blamed big business and other right-wing conservatives for most of the attacks on Canadian schools (i.e., those who "stand to make a fortune by privatizing education,") Berliner and Biddle (1995) pointed to federal level politicians, beginning with the Reagan administration, as being the co-conspirators in the assault on American schools. It was when "corporate America" teamed up with the Reagan and Bush administrations to echo their concerns about the state of public education that a "manufactured

crisis" was generated, and was indirectly fueled by increasing problems in society in general, and education in particular. This crisis was also promoted by interest-groups hostile to public education who wanted to divert attention away from America's growing social problems. Berliner and Biddle reported,

> The more we poked into our story . . . the more we learned about how government officials and their allies were ignoring, suppressing, and distorting evidence . . . about schools and their accomplishments. . . . We also began to wonder why this was happening -- why were some people in Washington so anxious to scapegoat educators, what were they really up to, what problems were they trying to hide, what actions did they want to promote or prevent? (1995, p.xi-xii)

Barlow and Robertson (1994) and Berliner and Biddle (1995) addressed (often the same) studies that they allege were flawed, or inaccurately reported, or both. These "clever pieces of propaganda" were used by government and business officials to lambaste public education; as well, these same individuals allegedly suppressed any evidence which contradicted their own allegations.

> Myths about public schools have been promoted not only by politicians, but also by some industrialists in our country. . . . Most seem to have been motivated by the desire to persuade Americans that our public schools are somehow responsible for a host of problems or challenges faced by American industry. (Berliner & Biddle, 1995, p.87)

America past. The 25 years post-World War II were unique in American history because they generated a booming economy and an expansion in publicly funded education. This took place amidst great optimism about the ability of public education to accomplish a wide range of social goals; however, when the economy crashed and social problems began to soar in the 1970s, these same expectations became the standards by which education was judged and subsequently found deficient (Berliner & Biddle, 1995). This was compounded by the lack of funding to finance the already expanded

educational programs; "Americans became less willing to fund the expansions in education that they still wanted." (Berliner & Biddle, 1995, p.130) At this time American industry found ways to reduce the amount they paid in taxes, and federal aid for education decreased; the burden of public school funding was increasingly shouldered by the individual taxpayer.

Right-wing ideologues became fashionable with the elections of Ronald Reagan and George Bush, and a number of wealthy reactionaries began to collaborate to promote a right-wing agenda in America by blaming the federal government for a majority of problems faced by educational institutions. Conservative economists advocated the reduction of the entire public sector -- including education -- in order to decrease the costs associated with publicly funded institutions. Free market advocates argued that public services were weak because they enjoyed monopoly status; they claimed that public services, including schools, would be stronger if they were forced to compete in the marketplace (Berliner & Biddle, 1995).

America present.

> As far as we're concerned, many of our political and corporate leaders are using educational reform as a scapegoat for problems schools didn't cause and can't fix. We believe many of these elected leaders and their corporate sponsors are engaging in a conspiracy -- a conspiracy against candor with the American people. (Berliner & Biddle, 1995, p.144)

Since most American schools are public institutions which utilize large portions of tax dollars, they are subjected to intense and relentless public scrutiny. Americans attack public schools in particular because of the unrealistic expectations they have of them, and then become disgruntled when the education system falls short of those expectations. But why would top government officials lead an assault on American schools? Berliner and Biddle

(1995) proposed three reasons: (a) for the first time Americans had elected a government which subscribed to the reactionary ideologies of right-wing ideologues, (b) the Reagan and Bush administrations were under pressure from "human capitalists" who wanted extensive and expensive modifications to American education. Since neither administration had any intention of allocating additional funding to education, lip service was paid to educational reform so as not to disgruntle corporate supporters. The burden of that reform was shifted to states, local communities, parents, and educators who were deemed incompetent and responsible for the problems faced by education, and (c) the Reagan and Bush administrations were faced with escalating social problems that neither administration wanted to resolve because their governments represented the interests of the wealthy. "Both administrations had reasons for diverting America's attention from federal failures to deal with domestic problems, and one way to do this was to blame those problems on educators and the schools." (Berliner & Biddle, 1995, p.148)

Myths generated by business according to Berliner and Biddle.

> A crisis exists today in American . . . education, and the situation is getting worse. . . . Achievements of students continue to decline despite large increases in funding for education. The American work force is rapidly losing its world-class status. If America becomes a third-ranked nation, behind Japan and Europe, as some people forecast, every individual in this country will lose. The obsolescence of the American school system is a major factor in that potential decline (Berliner & Biddle, 1995, p.86-87).

Berliner and Biddle (1995) claimed that the "manufactured crisis" was precipitated by the White House document A Nation At Risk, released in 1983, which was extremely critical of public education. At the same time, industry was claiming that American education was in serious trouble and that the United

States was falling behind foreign competitors. Myths espoused by education critics were "concerned with relations between schools and industry -- which blame education for problems and challenges faced by American business corporations." (Berliner & Biddle, 1995, p.65)

Myth #1: American schools are incompetent. For over a century business leaders have been complaining that public education is generally inadequate, that it fails in many respects, and that this threatens American industry. "In each decade some industrialists have complained about the shortcomings of public education, but our nation and its industries have somehow managed to survive, even thrive, during most of this period." (Berliner & Biddle, 1995, p.87)

Myth #2: American schools do not produce workers with good technical skills. One of the specific complaints by business is that American schools do not produce enough workers having the technical skills for the jobs of today or tomorrow. Berliner and Biddle argued that this is nonsense since evidence suggests that technical skills can be learned on the job, and that most industries are more concerned about the attitudes, motivation, and discipline of their workers.

Myth #3: It is the schools' faults that American workers are not productive.

Critics from the business community blame American workers and the schools that educated them for declines in American competitiveness and productivity.

Myth #4: Inadequate schooling means American industries must spend enormous sums on the remedial training of their workers. A Nation At Risk stated that business leaders are required to spend millions of dollars to provide remedial education and training in the basic skills of reading, writing, spelling,

and computation. This claim was echoed by many business leaders.

Myth #5: Big business is creating highly skilled jobs. The structure of work and the distribution of jobs have changed with the evolution of a global economy:

> The world is experiencing a watershed economic transformation as great as the industrial and agricultural revolutions. It is characterized by the transfer of economic power from nation-states to giant transnational corporations who operate outside of national law; the creation of huge competitive trade blocs; and an emerging global workforce, in which workers everywhere directly compete with one another. (Barlow & Robertson, 1994, p.62)

The purpose of this restructuring is not necessarily to ensure survival in a harsh economic climate, according to Barlow and Robertson (1994, p.64):

> Companies and their "transformational managers" are rewarded for aggressively and unsentimentally streamlining their workforces, driving workers to produce more with less, shedding national allegiances, evading regulation, forcing countries to drop import restrictions and relocating production where the workers are docile. Jobs are not being "lost" in the First World. They are being shifted to the Third.

And So. . .?

Why have Canadians and Americans been so willing to "buy into" these myths? Berliner and Biddle (1995) stated,

> We suspect that the answers to these questions reflect Americans' long-standing acceptance of the ideas that education *can* and *should* serve the needs of industry, that businesses must have an educated work force, and that investments in public education are needed to fuel the American economy. (p.95)

Overemphasis on the requirements of industry when making decisions about education enables members of the business community to exert influence on the education system. Barlow and Robertson (1994) argued that a business

community having the right to influence education would be one that had proven itself to be a social partner in Canadian life. They stated that such a business would:

> Be one deeply concerned about projected high unemployment among the young. It would be developing a full-employment strategy, not seeking every available vehicle to cut costs, slash employment and move work away from the country. It would be working to protect social programs and would be deeply concerned about the effects of automation instead of replacing workers with robots as fast as it can.
>
> Such a business community would know that workers making better pay put money back into and stabilize the economy; it would therefore work hand in hand with organized labour, not moving its production to non-unionized foreign sites. A business community with the right to influence our schools would be working through the United Nations and other international agencies to form an international code of conduct for transnational corporations, not allowing the law of the jungle to regulate people.
>
> Finally, a business community that had earned the right to profoundly influence the future of our young would not be training them to fit into a system of dog-eat-dog competitiveness that will work against their own interests and those of their families and communities. (pp.73-74)

On the other hand, proponents of business involvement in public education argue that we all have a common interest in wealth creation since our standard of living depends on a productive society; it is not possible to opt out of the laws of economics. Education should claim its right as an equal partner in the process of wealth creation, since the single most important factor in insuring Canada's future success will be the education, training, and re-training of our nation's workforce. This is increasingly important as we make our way through the information age. As a developed country our best hope of international competitive success is to find ways of putting our ingenuity and creativity on the market, and brain-power into our products. Since the natural, original source of brain-power is the education system, Canada's productivity will depend on the

mutually beneficial relationship between business and education.

Summary

There are currently two approaches to analyzing business involvement in education. First, there are those who welcome these programs; proponents of business-education joint ventures consist primarily of industrialists and those working in sectors which have close ties to business. Many supporters of business involvement in education believe that deficiencies in public education are the result of poor management practices and not inadequate funding; they do not agree with educators that more money necessarily translates into better education.

Second, there are those who oppose such programs and resent creeping business intrusion into the education system. Opponents of business involvement in education consist primarily of members of the teaching profession who believe these programs are little more than a disguise for business control in the education system. Educators stress the need to increase resources to schools, and believe that generous financing is critical to a well-run education system.

These two approaches as to why business wants to become more involved in the education system influenced the kinds of questions that were asked when collecting the data for this study; my intention was to address perspectives from both as part of the interviewing process.

"It is possible to be different and still be all right.
There can be two -- or more -- answers to the same question,
and all can be right."
-- Anne Wilson Schaef

Chapter 3

Research Design And Method

This chapter presents the research design and method employed in this study. The first section outlines the research design used in the planning of the study, while the second section addresses the research methods employed in executing it. The last section discusses the format chosen for the analysis and presentation of data.

The purpose of this research study was to explore and describe the perspective and perception of business regarding the nature and intent of its involvement in cooperative education programs. The objective was to develop an understanding of motives for employers' receptivity, involvement, and satisfaction with cooperative education at the post-secondary level. "We know much less than we should about employer motivation (or lack of motivation) to participate in [cooperative education] programs." (Lynn & Wills, 1994, p.11)

Research Design

This study was conducted using a qualitative framework, with emphasis placed on the analysis of data gathered through personal interviews.

> Interviewing is not simply devoted to data acquisition. It is also a time to consider relationships, salience, meanings, and explanations -- four analytic acts that not only lead to new questions, but also prepare you for the more concentrated period of analysis that follows the completion of your data collection. (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p.81)

This exploratory and descriptive study employed methods consistent with a naturalistic mode of inquiry, which is characterized as evolving, emerging, and flexible. According to Lincoln and Guba:

> The naturalist is likely to eschew random or representative sampling in favor of purposive or theoretical sampling because he or she thereby increases the scope of range of data exposed (random or representative sampling is likely to suppress more deviant cases) as well as the likelihood that the full array of multiple realities will be uncovered. (cited in Rudestam & Newton, 1992, p.75)

The qualitative methods used in naturalistic inquiry include the collection of data through interviews, descriptive accounts, document analysis, and the use of a journal to record impressions, reactions, and other events which may occur during data collection. The methods employed were consistent with what Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to as an interpretivist approach to research. The interpretivist framework confronts the fundamental questions of how different value positions can be brought together, and what makes communication and understanding between them possible. Interpretivism seeks to understand the meaning of social phenomena: Is business wanting to partner with education for self-serving reasons, as critics of such collaborations allege, or are their reasons less self-centered and more philanthropic, motivated by social responsibility and a concern for the future of our nation? Glesne and Peshkin (1992, p.6) summarized the concept of differing realities in the following statement:

> Since qualitative researchers deal with multiple, socially constructed realities or qualities that are complex and indivisible into discrete variables, they regard their research task as coming to understand and interpret how the various participants in a social setting construct the world around them.

Insight into corporate realities and their involvement in post-secondary education was what this study was able to uncover and describe; it also garnered an understanding of their perceptions of the reasons for their involvement, as well as their perceptions of the importance why.

Major considerations in the design of this study included: (a) the selection of an appropriate research design and method for the collection, analysis, and presentation of data, (b) the development and administration of accurate and appropriate interview questions by which the required data would be collected, and (c) the purposive selection of companies or Chief Executive Officers and Presidents to be included in both the pilot-testing of the interview questions and the subsequent collection of data using those interview questions.

Research Method

> The interview is an especially effective method of collecting information for certain types of research questions. . . . Particularly when investigators are interested in understanding the perceptions of participants, or learning how participants come to attach certain meanings to phenomena or events, interviewing provides a useful means of access. (Berg, 1989, p.19)

I decided that the focus of my study would be on the perceptions and perspectives of practicing Chief Executive Officers and Presidents with respect to the positions they occupied at the time of the study, as well as their organizations' philosophies and practices regarding involvement in post-secondary education. The first interview I conducted with participants was structured in format and consisted of questions designed to obtain a basic profile of the participant and the organization they represented.

> The *standardized interview* uses a formally structured schedule of interview questions. The interviewers are required to ask subjects to respond to each of these questions. The rationale here . . . is to offer each subject approximately the same stimulus so that responses to the questions, ideally, may be comparable. (Berg, 1989, p.15)

The second semi-structured interview comprised questions designed to gain insight into the beliefs, opinions, perceptions, and reactions of CEOs and Presidents as they related to business involvement in post-secondary education. The frequency of responses, perceptions, and attitudes was documented in an attempt to generate a composite profile of the "business perspective" of involvement in education in general, and cooperative education in particular. As well, those responses which were most frequent or typical were treated as themes for the purposes of analysis and presentation of the study's collected data.

Participants

Demographically, the only commonality of the 15 Chief Executive Officers and Presidents selected for this study was that all were business entrepreneurs; otherwise they were as varied as the general population. Great effort was made to include subjects from as many industry sectors as possible (13 in total), and to include individuals whose employing organizations varied in size from sole proprietor to multinational corporation; geographically the companies conducted business locally, provincially, nationally, and internationally.

As previously stated, the interview process was conducted with Chief Executive Officers and Presidents of companies which I felt were representative of their particular industry sector. In all cases I made initial contact by requesting the name of the individual having primary involvement in and

responsibility for the organization's cooperative education programs. In all cases I was put in contact with the CEO or President of the company. *Each CEO or President communicated to me that it was out of personal interest in and support for my research topic that they had agreed to let me interview them.* All participants but one permitted me to tape-record the interview process; one President expressed a preference that I take detailed notes of his responses to my interview questions. During each interview notes were taken to record spoken emphases and non-verbal communications. All study participants gave their permission to be quoted as I wished.

Study participants consisted of four women and 11 men who represented the following industry sectors: engineering, automotive, pharmaceutical, financial services, heavy industrial equipment sales and dealership, medical, real estate development, municipal governance, science and technology (research), utilities, natural resources, rehabilitative medicine, and gas and oil.

Five of the participants either were or have been involved in the educational system in the following capacities: (a) Dean of a university faculty, (b) university faculty member, (c) lecturer at a university, (d) instructor at a community college, and (e) high school teacher. Each of these participants' involvements in the education system lasted a minimum of 10 years, however, at the time of this study they all considered themselves to be entrepreneurs. It is worth noting that the majority of participants also guest-lectured at post-secondary institutions on a regular basis. Commenting on his move from education to business, one participant stated:

> Seniority and tenure, things of that nature, contribute more to the demise of those who think they are being protected because the best and the brightest will NOT be bottled up. If the best and the brightest are bottled up by things such as seniority or tenure, or anything like that, they will leave, they'll go elsewhere. And the

> result is that with the best and the brightest being stifled to the point where they can't stay in government or academia, they'll move into business . . . where else would you go? And so then educators, by virtue of doing something that they think is so important to them as a protective measure, are placing themselves at a greater and greater disadvantage because the best and the brightest minds won't be there, they will already have migrated over to business which is one of the best avenues for progression.

It should also be noted that each participant's employing company was a contributor of resources to post-secondary institutions, ergo their contributions of time, personnel, resources, and dollars corroborate their commitment to education.

I found all study participants surprisingly candid and forthright in sharing their thoughts and opinions during the interview process. The first interview lasted an average of one hour, while the second interview ranged in length from one hour to two and one-half hours. All participants requested a copy of the findings upon my completion of this study.

All tape-recorded interviews were transcribed by the researcher, and the beliefs, opinions, perceptions, and reactions of all participants were plotted in a matrix to identify both the themes and the non-themes which emerged. These themes and non-themes were instrumental in providing insight into the questions raised by this study.

Building rapport and trust. Berg (1989, p.17) stated that semi-structured interviews involve

> the implementation of a number of predetermined questions and/or special topics. These questions are typically asked of each interviewee in a systematic and consistent order, but allow the interviewers sufficient freedom to digress; that is, the interviewers are permitted (in fact expected) to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared and standardized questions. . . . Questions used in

> a semistandardized interview can reflect an awareness that individuals understand the world in varying ways. Researchers thus approach the world from the subject's perspective. Researchers can accomplish this through unscheduled probes that arise from the interview process itself.

The structured interview approach was used in order to achieve comparable data across subjects, but the use of a semi-structured interview format provided thick and rich descriptions of participants' personal reflections on the research topic. Occasionally I was asked to turn the tape-recorder off so the interviewee could speak more freely "off the record;" I was permitted to jot down notes in my journal at these times. Patton (1990, p.200) suggested that the advantage of using semi-structured interviews was that "the interviewer remains free to build conversation within a particular subject area, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a comfortable style with the focus and particular subject that has been predetermined."

After the first couple of interviews it became apparent that the interview questions did not need to be addressed in a predetermined order, but could be asked, when appropriate, according to comments made by the interviewee. Not all questions were appropriate or relevant to all participants; however, the first five questions and related sub-questions contained in the first interview were asked according to the interview schedule. This allowed participants to talk about themselves thereby providing me with some understanding of them, their companies' operations, and their thoughts and feelings about cooperative education in general. This approach was conducive to (a) promoting a relaxed conversational atmosphere and (b) building rapport and trust. *Since the quality of data collected logically depends upon the quality of the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee, comfort and trust should be established as*

early in the interview experience as possible.

Since I was interviewing individuals employed in a wide range of industry sectors, with interviews conducted both in participants' offices and in the field, the location of the interview became an opportunity to quickly put both the participant and I at ease by my wearing, carrying, or saying something completely unexpected. Perhaps the best example of this included my arrival at a construction site clad in denim overalls and carrying a hardhat under one arm -- the participant's reaction to and, perhaps, appreciation of my deliberate effort to fit into his environment instantly put us both at ease. Before the interview process, and as I was being given a tour of the construction site, I overheard queries in reference to "the new one," that is, employee; the President looked at me and chuckled. In each case I made a concerted effort to put participants at ease with, at the very least, an innocuous and humorous observation just as we were about to begin the interview. By establishing an initial rapport with my participants in this way, our interactions were much more relaxed thereby enhancing the credibility and the quality of data collected.

Analytical Procedures

Given the exploratory and descriptive nature of naturalistic inquiry, the analysis of data occurred in an evolving manner wherein classifications for the data emerged as they were collected; these classifications were then applied to other data where applicable. This approach enabled me to provide in-depth, rich, contextual descriptions of the collected information.

In their discussion on presenting the results of qualitative research, Rudestam and Newton (1992) stated, "Making sense of the data in the naturalistic sense means processing the data through some technique of

inductive analysis." (p.114) Induction, as defined in Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, is "the act, process, or result or an instance of reasoning from a part to a whole, from particulars to generals, or from the individual to the universal." According to Rudestam and Newton (1992):

> One approach involves two essential subprocesses that compose the basis of inductive analysis, unitizing and categorizing. *Unitizing* is essentially a coding operation that identifies information units isolated from the text. In the second subprocess, *categorizing*, information units derived from the unitizing phase are organized into categories on the basis of similarity in meaning. As the number of categories reaches a saturation point the researcher attempts to write rules that define which units of information may be included or excluded from the category. This process is called the "constant comparative method" by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The constant comparative method requires continual revision, modification, and amendment until all new units can be placed into an appropriate category and the inclusion of additional units into a category provides no new information. (p.114)

The constant comparative method was an appropriate technique for organizing the results of this study in order to answer the research questions; following a conceptual definition of the meaning of "category," relevant quotes which illustrated these categories were presented.

Content Analysis

I analyzed the contents of the transcribed interviews for recurring themes that had emerged during the process of collecting data, and for content that expanded on the thematic categories. The analysis of documents given to me by participants provided additional information regarding overt expectations, context, and corporate history which effected the philosophies and operations of the organization. "Most content analyses in education have been aimed at answering questions directly relating to the material analyzed." (Borg & Gall,

1989, p.520) The objective of employing content analysis in this study was to produce descriptive information which would provide a better understanding of the perspective and perception of business regarding the nature and intent of its involvement in cooperative education programs.

> Content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication. . . . Recent content-analysis studies consider not only content frequencies but also the interrelationships among several content variables, or the relationship between content variables and other research variables. (Borg & Gall, 1989, pp.519, 521)

Berg (1989, p.105) described content analysis in the following way:

> In content analysis, researchers examine artifacts of social communications. Typically, these are within documents or transcriptions of recorded verbal communications. Broadly defined, however, content analysis is "any technique for making inferences by systematic and objective identifying identifying special characteristics of messages." (Holsti, 1968:608)

In discussing category development and the building of grounded theory, Berg stated that,

> The various categories researchers use in a content analysis can be determined inductively, deductively, or by some combination of both (Strauss, 1987). Abrahamson (1983:286) indicates that an inductive approach begins with the researchers "immersing" themselves in the documents (that is, various messages) in order to identify the dimensions or *themes* that seem meaningful to the producers of each message. . . . In order to present the perceptions of others (the producers of messages) in the most forthright manner, a reliance upon induction is necessary. . . . The development of inductive categories allows researchers to link, or *ground* these categories to the data from which they derive. (pp.111-112)

Matrix Cross-Tabulation

A matrix of 15 participants (30 interviews in total) by 66 themes was subjected to various cross-tabular comparisons. The decision to concentrate on themes, and any non-themes which arose, was made to in order to limit the analysis to trends in thinking and dissenting opinions. This is not to suggest that the remaining data were not insightful or valuable to the completion of the study; it was during the content analysis phase that the data not used in the matrix proved to be enlightening.

Trustworthiness

Glesne and Peshkin (1992, pp.147-148) identified six ways to increase the trustworthiness of data collection. I will address how I incorporated each of these suggestions into my study method, as well as describe the steps I took to make the data and its analysis as trustworthy as possible.

First, **time** is a major factor in the acquisition of trustworthy data, that is, time at the research site, time spent interviewing, and time to build sound relationships with participants. I spent considerable time in contact with my study's participants, both during the interview process and after, to keep them informed of my progess through the transcriptions and analyses of collected data. Participants seemed pleased to be kept involved and informed about the study's progress.

Second, **triangulated findings** were also employed to improve the trustworthiness of data. Prior to interviewing each of my study participants, I researched their companies, the histories, operations, and, where available, the most recent finanical statements. Also, by keeping a journal to record personal observations during the interview, such as added emphases and body

language, I was able to get a better sense of participants' feelings on the research topic area; not only did I record verbal communication, I recorded whether it appeared consistent with what I was observing non-verbally. It is worthy of mention that my first university degree was in Sociology/Psychology. Finally, the majority of participants put together a package for me which outlined their company's operations, mission statement, short- and long-term goals, etc. I found this to be very informative as approximately one-half of these packages addressed the company's involvement in cooperative education.

Third, in an effort to maintain continual **alertness to researcher biases** I would transcribe one interview and then analyze it. I would then leave this piece of data for a period of time before revisiting it to see if my initial transcription and analysis seemed accurate. By repeatedly revisiting the transcripts and analyses in this way, I was able to discern the consistency of my own interpretations of the data over time. Since I had 30 interviews to transcribe and analyze, returning to previously analyzed data became akin to engaging in a game of "musical analysis."

I did not enlist an outsider to **"audit"** interview and journal notes, as well as subsequent analyses and interpretations, as the majority of this study's participants wanted the assurance that only I, the researcher, would be privy to what they had to say until such time as the original tapes, transcriptions, analyses, and fieldnotes had been destroyed by me. I agreed to this request.

Fifth, **sharing** the interpretive process with research respondents to ensure accuracy of data was done through a member check. All participants were provided with transcriptions of their interviews and informed that they could make any changes they wished, including its withdrawal from the study. My goal was to accurately reflect the intention of their communications with me.

Last, realizing the **limitations** of my study helped demonstrate the trustworthiness of the data I collected; the study's limitations were a continual consideraton during the analysis of the data.

Ethical Considerations

Approval to conduct this study was granted by the Ethics Review Committee of the Department of Educational Policy Studies, as guided by the University of Alberta's policy on ethics and the study of human participants. The following assurances were made to all participants in compliance with policy guidelines:

1. Participants were assured, and reminded, that their identities and any identifying characteristics would be protected through the anonymous and confidential handling of data by the researcher; they were informed that their identities and responses would be held in strictest confidence according to the guidelines set forth by the Ethics Review Committee at the University of Alberta. They were also informed that all tape-recorded interviews would be erased and all transcriptions of those tapes would be destroyed upon the completion of the study.

2. Participants' involvement in the study was completely voluntary and each participant was informed that they were free to withdraw at any time, and for any reason.

3. The tape-recording of interviews was done with participants' full knowledge and consent.

4. A member check was conducted wherein all participants were provided with a copy of their transcribed interviews. They were asked to read it for accuracy, clarity, and intent; participants were reminded that they were free

to make any changes they wished, including its withdrawal from the study. Not one participant made changes to their transcribed interview or withdrew from the study; the majority provided me with positive feedback regarding the accuracy and completeness of the transcriptions.

5. All participants granted me permission to quote them as I wished.

Chapter 4

"There are no new truths, but only truths that have not been recognized by those who have perceived them without noticing."
-- Mary McCarthy

Analysis And Presentation Of Data

Description Of The Respondent Group

Study participants consisted of four women and 11 men who represented the following 13 industry sectors: engineering, automotive, pharmaceutical, financial services, heavy industrial equipment sales and dealership, medical, real estate development, municipal governance, science and technology (research), utilities, natural resources, rehabilitative medicine, and gas and oil. Fourteen participants were either the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), President, or Owner of their employing organizations; one participant referred to himself as the General Manager of his company. Thirteen of the organizations were involved primarily in sales and service, one involved specialized engineering construction, and another was involved in research and development. The number of individuals employed by the represented companies ranged from one individual to 3,200 employees nationally, and 42,000 internationally. Gross revenues ranged from $0.5M to $2.2B per annum, and gross assets under management ranged from $30M to $125B; only one participant chose to not answer this question. Primary consumers of the participants' companies included either individuals, other businesses, or the government; in eight cases some combination of the three formed the consumer base for the organization's operations. Geographically the companies conducted business locally,

provincially, nationally, or internationally.

Five of the participants either were or have been involved in the educational system in the following capacities: (a) Dean of a university faculty, (b) university faculty member, (c) lecturer at a university, (d) community college instructor, and (e) high school teacher. Each of these individuals' involvements in the educational system lasted a minimum of 10 years. It is worth noting that the majority of this study's participants guest-lectured at post-secondary institutions on a regular basis.

Organization And Presentation Of The Results

Three classifications of participants emerged from the data as they were being collected: (a) those who either were or have been involved in the educational system (5 participants), (b) those whose locus of operations were international (4 participants), and (c) those whose locus of operations were within Alberta (6 participants). I have chosen to label these three groupings of participants as (a) "The Insiders," (b) "The Multinationals," and (c) "The Alberta Advantage" to reflect the parallelism which evolved within these groups.

Due to the sheer volume and complexity of data collected, their presentation and analysis has been split into three chapters: data collected from The Insiders are included in this fourth chapter; Chapter 5 contains the analysis and presentation of data collected from The Multinationals; and finally, The Alberta Advantage data are analyzed and presented in Chapter 6. Rudestam and Newton (1992, p.81) stated, "It would probably be best to organize the results around answering the *research question(s)*," and this is what I have done. Within each of the classifications of participants, I have elected to group interview questions thematically as they relate to my specific

research questions:

1. Why does business want to be involved in cooperative education programs?
2. What internal and external considerations influence corporate decision-makers to become involved in cooperative education programs?
3. Does business identify its goals as being short-term or long-term with respect to its involvement in cooperative education?

I begin this journey into previously uncharted territory with Group One: The Insiders.

Group One: The Insiders

"What most of us want is to be heard, to communicate."
-- Dory Previn

Introduction

As mentioned, The Insiders included those study participants who either were or had been involved in the educational system as faculty for a minimum of 10 years at the university, community college, and high school levels. There are five participants in this group who represent 33% of this study's findings.

As a group The Insiders were unexpectedly the most vehement during the interviews and discussions on their perceptions of the nature and intent of business involvement in cooperative education at the post-secondary level. For example, as I sat in the former university Dean's office at his place of business, I was struck by the superfluity of framed quotations which he referred to as the principles which guided his multi-million dollar business. He shared with me that the quote most reflective of, and relevant to, his success in business was,

> "It is not enough that we do our best; sometimes we have to do what is required." -- Winston Churchill

Others which reflected his company's philosophy included,

> "Image is more important than knowledge." -- Albert Einstein

> "I have found out that a man's accomplishments in life are the cumulative effect of his attention to detail." -- John Foster Dulles

My personal favourite read,

> "Only those who attempt the absurd can achieve the impossible." -- Unknown

On the topic of business-education partnerships, the former Dean echoed the sentiments of The Insiders when he stated,

> We need a number of educational representatives to talk to a number of business representatives, all willing to work on a non-confrontational project to try and get a marriage between industry and education. They need to TALK and try to find common ground. In order to understand your opponent, is it not best to walk a mile in his moccasins?

Being that each of these participants HAS walked a mile in the moccasins of their "opponents," their perceptions as to the nature and intent of business' involvement in cooperative education at the post-secondary level provided a unique "insider" perspective on the issue of motive. Lynn and Wills (1994, p.11) reminded us that "We know much less than we should about employer motivation (or lack of motivation) to participate in [cooperative education] programs."

I began the interviewing process by asking each of The Insiders about cooperation, cooperative education, and their expectations of a cooperative education program. When talking about cooperation, the former high school teacher defined it in the following way:

> Cooperation means working together, it means communicating, it means having a goal that has rewards for both partners. You've got to set a goal, you've got to communicate, and you've got to work together to achieve that goal. To me, that is cooperation.

The university lecturer defined cooperative education as

> Programs where students have, during their formal education process, embedded work terms that are also formalized and part of the educational process wherein they are monitored and evaluated. I see it as the integration of a formal work experience component into the formal educational process.

When asked what his expectations of a cooperative education program were, the university faculty member relayed the following:

> We have co-op students here more out of a sense of professional responsibility . . . to give something back to the profession. Really, my expectations are that the students that come through here have a good basic grounding in the core subjects that they SHOULD be comfortable in. And my expectations are that when they leave here they're going to be pretty comfortable and pretty safe in what they're doing.

A most interesting insight was proffered by the former community college instructor who said,

> I don't think post-secondary institutions realize the power they have in their hands by being government run post-secondary institutions . . . it gives them a lot of credibility, a LOT of credibility. It doesn't matter what country you go to . . . if you're affiliated with the University of Alberta or with Grant McEwan or with NAIT, immediately they will look up to you. So it's not hard to sell your services, but you've got to structure yourself in a way to capitalize on that.

On this same topic, another participant articulated,

> What would be my expectations? I guess I'd have a couple. One is I would hope that it would give students a more formal and more appropriate experience component to add into their education, so that their education would then become, in some ways, more relevant and they would be able to see that relevance. I would also see it as an opportunity for business to assess students and

> their capabilities, and ultimately evaluate them as potential employees. I would see it as a way for companies to, if you like, develop relationships with the universities or the other post-secondary institutions which would perhaps be useful from a networking point of view in that you would know the expertise that's out there, what they have to offer, and that kind of thing.

Theme #1: Why Does Business Want To Be Involved In Cooperative Education Programs?

"I was taught that the way of progress is neither swift nor easy."
-- Marie Curie

In order to understand the status of cooperative education programs from an implementation perspective, several preliminary questions needed to be asked of the participants regarding their school-business alliances, and their perceptions of them. The first questions I asked participants were, ***"As a businessperson, are you aware of cooperative education programs?"*** and ***"Have you ever been involved in a cooperative education program?"*** since their answers to these two questions served as the foundation for this study.

All of The Insiders were aware of cooperative education programs, and all but one were or had been involved in one; in two cases the cooperative program was an ongoing arrangement.

> I think co-op is very very important. I think it makes a much better graduate because what happens is that as they get into the co-op experience situation, educational theories become much more meaningful because now they're relevant, they relate to something, to experiences they've had and so on . . . as opposed to just being a lecture or a piece of theory. So co-op is really valuable, and co-op students are much better students, partly because they self-select -- they WANT to get into the program; so the better students tend to go that route, for the most part.

The one participant who chose not to be involved in a cooperative education program stated that a lack of time was the reason for not becoming involved, even though the willingness to participate was there.

> I guess because I have a background in post-secondary education I realize how much work and attention co-op students require to make their stay very beneficial for them. In some cases companies will take a student on but not put in the effort they should, and so the student doesn't get anything from the experience. I didn't want to do that.

When asked ***"Are you aware of other businesses in your industry sector that are involved in cooperative education programs?"*** , two of The Insiders stated that they were aware of others, and three stated that they did not know "for sure."

The Insiders were asked, ***"Let us now turn our minds to thinking more generally about business involvement in education. In pragmatic terms, what does 'cooperation' mean to you when we talk about cooperative ventures between business and education?"*** The university lecturer provided an answer that was most representative of participants' responses:

> It means a lot of things. It means working together to try and develop programs that are of value to both industry and education. It means helping educators understand what industry's needs are in order to learn how to develop, adopt, and modify programs so that they can better meet those needs. It may mean industry coming to the table with dollars to help educators do things that are particularly innovative, that is, where they are meeting industry's needs, but the dollars aren't available through normal funding channels TO the education system. But predominantly it's content-based -- helping educators to understand what the content requirements are and hoping that they, in return, are willing to be kind of adaptable and flexible in trying to meet the needs that are out there.

Responding to the next question, ***"How well do you feel educators understand business' concerns and needs as employers?"***, all participants but one can be paraphrased by the comment, "Not entirely, but somewhat." Participants felt that educators value input from the business community and want to know about business' needs and concerns, even if they don't understand or agree with them. According to the former Dean,

> In general I think they probably do understand one another in broad terms, in terms of what they're trying to achieve and what they would like, and so on. I think industry is frustrated by educators because they often find them relatively unwilling to move significant distances very quickly.

The dissenting opinion with respect to this question came from the university faculty member who said,

> No. I don't think they care. They're told that they have to stick to this curriculum and teach this number of kids within this budget within this certain time. And they've got to get these kids past an exam, and that's it. And while they're doing that they've got to do some research and they've got to do some publications. And within those strictures I don't think they give a damn what we care about in the big wide world.

Flipping the question around, I asked, ***"How well do you feel business understands the concerns and needs of educators?"*** to which participants unanimously replied that they understood the needs of educators "quite well." Again, the university faculty member was the most impassioned in his response to this question:

> Yeah, I understand the needs of educators. I'm sympathetic to them. No, I'm a little bit jaded on that, actually. I think they've got a very narrow agenda, a very personalized agenda. I have to be very careful, again, because I know a number of educators, and a number of them are very good people and are very good at what they do, and are my friends. But perhaps it's being in the hallowed halls of university . . . a lot of them have a very narrow perspective on why they're there, what they're there for. Some of that, again, is

> forced upon them by the university because it's publish or perish. But it seems to me that whole reason for a university's existence isn't to publish and research, it's to further the education of people, students. And the students have been lost in this. The students seem to be secondary to this whole function, and they should be the first in the whole function. And I am very very angry about that, actually. Obviously they would like more money for themselves and for their departments . . . their agenda is very very different. Now having said that, there are a few guys I know, and girls I know, that realize that their existence in this sort of encapsulated time-cell is not what the real world is like, and they specifically go out so that they can see what's going on in the real world.

When asked, ***"As a businessperson, what do you think are some of the concerns about business being involved in education, from educators' perspectives?"*** these insiders had the following to say:

> One thing educators don't like is being told how to do their jobs because they think they know how to do their jobs, that's THEIR business. They figure it's not business' business to educate.

The former community college instructor felt it was a loss of control and loss of funding which would concern educators the most:

> Probably the loss of funding and control would be the two biggest concerns. I mean, the only reason that education wants to get involved with business is because they feel business should be putting money into it. But the minute somebody . . . it's like the minute you share the ownership of something, you no longer have sole control over it. And I think that eventually as business gets more and more involved, education should require less and less government funding.

The former high school teacher had the following thoughts on what would concern educators the most about business' involvement:

> I would think education would think that we're trying to meddle too much or tell them what to do, or that we'd be too focused on our own needs rather than the overall needs of the students. Being an ex-educator, an ex-teacher, I know that teachers want to take control of what they're doing with the students, and this is good. But, they need to look at the bigger picture -- there are a lot of educators that have never worked in the real world . . . they're not

> in day-to-day operations where you come to work in the morning and maybe your whole day has changed because of a phonecall or a business deal that went sideways, or one that you were awarded, and now all of a sudden you've got to refocus everybody. Just this morning we were awarded a $5M project, so now we're all scrambling -- rescheduling, reorganizing, what have you.

These three perspectives reflected a consensus among The Insiders, who also believed that a change of the status quo, a demand for accountability, and promotion/retention based on merit and value would be of concern to educators because it would mean "the shaking up of a comfortable, insular, and cloistered brotherhood." The former high school teacher stated that he thought educators perceived business involvement as "a threat or an intrusion, and motivated by self-interest;" the former university Dean expressed his concern about the proliferation of "anti-business" sentiment emanating from within the educational system.

I then asked The Insiders the same question but from yet another perspective, that is, ***"As a businessperson, what do you think are some of the concerns about business being involved in education, from the government's perspective?"*** The university faculty member had the following thoughts:

> I think the government doesn't like to lose control, and so I think they would have a concern about business being involved in universities. On the other hand, the amount of money that government can put toward universities now is limited and so they can see that there has to be some other source of revenues, and business is going to be good for that -- so there's obviously going to be some sort of trade-off. I'm afraid I don't view government in a very positive light in a lot of areas, so I think their fear of losing control over what's going on in post-secondary education is likely to overcome the need for perhaps other forms of funding.

The university lecturer had a related perspective on what he thought the government's concerns might be:

> I think that the government would like business to pick up a larger part of the tab, and I think that educators would like this, too, because government is struggling for dollars. So there's kind of an expectation that, "Well, if you want to have a say, then you should put some money on the table." And business does, maybe not enough, but it does. I think that government clearly would like to be able to spend less for education, if it could, but it knows that it HAS to, and so it's getting shoved from all directions -- industry is telling it to spend more money, education is saying, "We need more money," and students are saying, "We don't want to pay as much as you're making us pay." It's a really interesting problem. In the end, really, when you think about it, in a sense business pays the freight regardless of how you cut it, if you follow the flow of money. So it's kind of just a matter of semantics. But it's a real concern and I think government recognizes their role in providing basic essential services, but they have a hard time adapting to swings in the economy as it moves from emphasizing one sector to another. And we've seen times of shortage and we've seen times of surplus, so how much and what level can they optimally support? And so they say, "Well you know, industry, if you need more of this or more of that then you should probably at least be coming to the table with some money to support it." My sense is that industry is not opposed to this, but they want some say, a "voice" if you will, about where that money goes and what it will support.

The former high school teacher had a somewhat different take on the government's reaction to increased business involvement in education:

> Oh I think government actually would enforce it . . . it's part of the new trend in governments, and that is to privatize. They would be happy to have business get more involved . . . they're looking at it from a financial perspective; but I would say that the government would support it, yeah.

In all cases when I asked The Insiders about what they thought the government's concerns would be, discussions about privatization inevitably ensued. Surprisingly, four of the five Insiders felt two-tiered systems in

education and health care were fine, and they did not believe that it was an imperative of the government's to make everything universal to everybody. The university faculty member was very vocal about his opinions on privatization.

> And it's this idea that there shouldn't be a two-tiered health system, which is nonsense, because there already is. This whole idea that everything has to be universal because "I want my rights" or "If I can't have it, you can't have it either." Well, that's nonsense. So the whole system and everybody's ideas are totally skewed. So going back to health care and education, everything's got to be universal . . . the government says so, all the unions say so, all the socialists say so. They know damn well they haven't got the money to pay for it, so they have to restrict it, or cap it. Why not bite the bullet and say, "If you want charge a little bit extra for this particular thing, why not?" And those that don't want to wait and can afford to pay, WILL! And that in itself will free up spaces for those who can't. If you've got something like that where you introduce some competition into education or the marketplace, wherever it may be, it's good because it makes everyone kick themselves up a notch. I think what we should be doing in secondary education is having a two-tiered system; I think it's a fantastic idea, absolutely fantastic. You see everybody wringing their hands, "Oh, what about all the inner-city schools?" and all that sort of thing. Well, what about them? You can have good teachers there and you have kids there that, if the environment is right, they can pass the stuff. Some of the teachers, I don't know, they're there until their pension cheque comes in. I think the two biggest impediments to effective or proper education are the unions and the lack of performance reviews, that is to say, tenure. If a teacher isn't performing, kick them out.

The university lecturer had a slightly different perspective on the privatization of education and other things involving the government:

> I'm not an advocate of privatized education, but I'm a strong believer in the fact that there is a need for private education facilities who provide very narrow specific skills, and do it on a full cost-recovery basis. And they are the ones that should be dealing with, what I call, the real "market shift" stuff; so where there's a high risk, a high degree of change or whatever, that's where they ought to operate because they're much more flexible, they'll be able to adapt more quickly, they're not locked into union agreements or things which inhibit their ability to change rapidly according to

> market shifts in the economy. I also don't believe that it's the government's job to educate anyone who wants to be educated to whatever level they want to be educated to. I think that is the individual's responsibility, and that the public should only support what's needed for the economy to work . . . and then let the thing sort itself out in terms of equality and performance, etc. So that would mean that not everybody would be able to get into university, at least not with the public paying 80% of it. When it comes to education, I believe that, well when it comes to a lot of things, we've got this sense that the government -- whatever that is, because it's all of us anyhow, should somehow make everything available to everybody, and I don't buy that.

Moving along in the interview process, The Insiders were asked, ***"Is cooperative education a good vehicle for business to express its concerns and make an impact on education?"*** Three thought, yes, it was a good vehicle, two said, no, it wasn't; the former community college instructor explained why:

> I don't think so. No, because all you're doing is you're basically offering a short-term environment for somebody to come into, so I think you have more of an impact on the actual individual than you do on the institution. It doesn't have an impact on the institution at all, I don't think. Generally when you set up a student to come to the place of work, you try to guide that student through some of the practical stuff they've been taught. But in the evaluation you never evaluate what the student brought with them from their educational institution . . . you're evaluating what the student got from the business world to take back for themselves. I guess what I'm saying is that I don't believe that educational institutions ask for feedback on their programs. I guess if you don't hire any of their students that's feedback alone.

The university lecturer concurred with the above when he stated,

> Co-op is an excellent program, but I don't think it's a way that industry influences education so much as simply allowing the education process to benefit from students who have a better work experience base.

"Is there consensus within your business sector community regarding expectations of post-secondary education?" garnered unanimous agreement among The Insiders, whose responses were best reflected by the statement,

> The product of the education system is one of the key inputs into business. People are what make businesses work, and so they need the skill sets and they need the people, not only with the skills, but also with the attitudes that are required to do the job. The challenge, I guess, is many times educators believe that they have to do certain things. I'll give you an example which I understand reasonably well, and that is engineering. In the case of engineering you've got a whole bunch of players that are sort of interacting and affecting the educational system. You have the engineering faculties themselves who are there, and they have their programs and they have their faculty, and they're trying to do things obviously that match them. There's accrediting lobbies who say, "This is what you have to teach, and if you're going to deliver a program then it must include these things." You've got industry who is saying, "Here's the kind of skill sets we want to see in the students coming out," and they tend to push more to the practical base while educators tend to push more to the theoretical base. So with engineers, as opposed to say a tech school graduate, or something like that where their education would be much more practically oriented, the engineers have this nice theoretical ground, but in fact they're not very productive in their early years of employment. Well, industry has to understand that, and that's hard for a lot of companies; they have to be willing to participate on an ongoing basis, if I can put it that way, and provide opportunities for the educational system, and maybe others, to continue to provide learning experiences. The statistics that I've heard are that the half-life, for example, of an engineer's education, depending on the field they're in, today ranges from about two to maybe seven years at the maximum. So if you think in the very high-tech areas, like electronics or computer engineering, that in two years after they graduate one-half of what they've learned had already been superseded or deemed obsolete, and four years after they graduate 75% is, and so on. The education system really has to teach them more how to learn, and instill a compelling curiosity and desire to learn, so that they can continue to keep up-to-date. And a lot of it has to be self-motivated because you can't perpetually be in school. But because from a business perspective it is only partially possible, it then becomes the

> employee's responsibility. So that attitude, that curiosity, that desire to want to learn and learn and learn has to be instilled by the education system. On the other hand, business has to recognize that they're not going to get people with skills that are going to stay valuable for a long time . . . they'll only be valuable as employees if they continue to learn. And so you get companies, and I'll give you an example again, like Telus, who say that they spend 10% of their wage payroll on training. That's a huge amount!

The Insiders all felt that "educators are taught to teach rather than teach from experience." They also expressed support for the idea of educators being taken out of the educational system and into the workplace on a "business practicum," as well as finding more ways to brings individuals from the business community into the academic community, particularly the classroom. The former high school teacher commented:

> I think that business should play a leading role as to what education should be providing. Again the example is the old 1960 textbooks and the old 1960 professors that haven't been out there in the industry teaching; they're teaching out-dated curriculum. They need to be upgraded, they need to be sent out into industry, or wherever, to be upgraded so that they're teaching what technology is doing today . . . now . . . not yesterday.

Theme #2: What Internal And External Considerations Influence Corporate Decision-Makers To Become Involved In Cooperative Education Programs?

> "If an idea, I reasoned, were really a valuable one,
> there must be some way of realizing it."
> -- Elizabeth Blackwell

It is important to note that, while I made a concerted effort to categorize interview questions according to the three themes, or specific research questions set forth in Chapter 1 of this study, there was inevitably some overlap

due to the comprehensiveness of some interview questions. Quite frequently, when answering the question posed to them, participants unknowingly addressed later questions in the interview schedule; however, I have been assured that this is characteristic of qualitative research -- it is evolving, emerging, and flexible. The most important thing, however, is that responses to *all* interview questions have been included within the theme deemed most appropriate, based on participants' responses to the questions asked.

In an attempt to understand motive, or the desire to become increasingly involved in education, I asked participants questions about the internal and external considerations influencing these corporate decisions. My first question to them was, ***"How important is previous work experience, or work-based learning, for the graduates you hire?"*** Just two of The Insiders stated that it was "reasonably" important. ***"What were the most significant factors influencing your decision to participate in cooperative education programs?"*** The university faculty member eloquently summarized the sentiments of The Insiders:

> The primary one is professional responsibility. Secondary ones would include intellectual stimulation because if you *do* get a real bright cookie that comes through here and asks lots of good questions and keeps you on your toes, that's very stimulating. Further down the list would be that it gives you a chance to preview what is coming out of the university. It also keeps me in contact with the university -- not me, this business in contact with the university -- and I think that's an important thing, PR-wise, for our business. And that's about it.

"What have been some of the challenges of being involved in cooperative education?" The Insiders all agreed that the biggest challenge was

> . . . Time. Finding the time, or dedicating an employee, to supervise the student in activities and assignments which will be meaningful for them.

The university faculty member had the following to say in response to my question on the challenges of cooperative education placement students:

> The main challenge is that it's extremely tiring because you're having to manage a full day's schedule, and you're having to manage a lost and forlorn student. And because of what I've said previously where we try and make it a really one-on-one learning experience where there's lots of teaching going on, a lot of question and answer stuff, that puts a great deal of strain on you, particularly if you've got a week of heavy days. What we've had to do, because I'm getting older, is my secretary has now cut my list down a little bit for me so that I can give more attention to the student. So actually, financially we take a little bit of a knock because I'm not able to see quite as many people now as I used to, when the student is here. So that would be the main challenge. Secondary challenge, I think, would be that it can be very difficult if you've got someone that you aren't clicking with and you've got them there in your face every day for five weeks and you're not clicking . . . that can be difficult. It's only happened twice that I can remember. And it can also be a bit of a challenge getting patients used to having a fresh face come in and look at them and ask all the old questions, and all that sort of thing. Some of them just don't like that and I can appreciate why. The other challenge is that you've got to keep up with the bookwork in order to keep up with the students. So that's it, mainly.

Flipping the question around, I asked, "***How has your involvement in cooperative education programs been of value to your organization?***", to which The Insiders agreed that it was the "intellectual stimulation resulting from students asking questions and presenting new ideas" that they valued the most. Ironically, intellectual stimulation was also one of the challenges they cited when taking in a cooperative education student. The former community college instructor answered this question by saying,

> Oh, I think the biggest advantage is that you get to find out their attitudes and their work ethics. Generally, when students graduate from an academic institution you know by looking at their transcripts and CVs what they've come out with in terms of knowledge . . . so you can be pretty sure of that. But you can never be sure of work ethics, attitudes, and that's the biggest advantage

> of co-op, I think. It's the other part . . . it's that soft part of the person that you get to evaluate -- if you want to break it up into soft skills and hard skills -- things you can't really pick up on in an interview that co-op allows you to evaluate.

Theme #3: Does Business Identify Its Goals As Being Short-Term Or Long-Term With Respect To Its Involvement In Cooperative Education?

> "Our grand business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance,
> but to do what lies clearly at hand."
> -- Thomas Carlyle

Here I was looking for any future considerations participants or their employing organizations might have had regarding their involvements in cooperative education programs. The university lecturer made the following observation:

> Educators don't always agree with industry because we tend to take a very short-term view -- we want to solve today's problems. Educators say, "OK, but we're more concerned about the longer term, the future," and you sometimes get discontinuities between these two positions.

It seemed to me that a basic premise of their involvements in education was that they thought that they *should* be involved, so I asked the two fundamental questions, ***"Should business be involved in education?"*** and ***"What do you see as the 'business' between business and education?"*** Not surprisingly, all of The Insiders thought that business should be involved in education. The university faculty member stated,

> I think it's incumbent upon private business to get involved in education because it lets them know what's going on there; and if business is contributing financially towards certain things, it gives them a little bit of leverage about what's going on in post-secondary institutions. The more finances that you're putting in there, the more leverage you're going to get. So if something

> starts to happen that you think is wrong or needs to be changed, I think it's a hell of a lot more possible to do it if you already have connections with the university than if you're coming from outside and they don't know you from anything.

As quoted previously, one participant felt that the "business" between industry and education centered around the fact that

> The product of the education system is one of the key inputs into business. People are what make business work, and so they need the skill sets and they need not only the people skills, but also the attitudes that are required to do the job.

The Insiders felt that the business between industry and education should involve the investment of capital by business for (a) recognition as a good corporate citizen, (b) research for the future, and (c) the opportunity to influence the nature of education being provided to students.

To the question ***"How might cooperation between business and education be strengthened?"*** I got the following responses:

> Well, it takes people going out and doing it. Each has to reach out to the other, in effect. If I want education to do the kind of job that I need it to do for this business, then obviously I've got to tell them what I need them to do, and that means I've got to be willing to spend the time and effort to do that. And then if I want it to go beyond that, then I've got to be willing to try to get others in the organization involved in that, too. Part of that is everything from getting people in to actually teach courses or participate in teaching courses, or come in as guest lecturers, or invite the educators here so they understand how we work and what we do and what's important to us -- we'd be willing to participate on advisory boards, to serve on setting up accreditation criteria, etc. If you want to work together, you've got to work together, and that's what it's about, I think.

The former community college instructor had a unique perspective on how industry-education relations might be strengthened:

> Educational institutions are in an extremely strong position to offer consulting services to business. They supposedly have people who are state-of-the-art. I think that they could make a tremendous

> amount of money in providing those type of services, even if it's in business development or marketing . . . any areas. They could even provide the service of coming in and totally restructuring administrative offices. They've got the expertise. Whether they have the system set up to provide that expertise in addition to teaching, I don't know. But I think that if they became more involved in selling services, they would become more involved in knowing what business requires. They need massive restructuring to be successful. You have to move away from the pay scales that you have, you have to move to a commission-based system; you have to give incentives for your instructors, who are professionals in their fields to make money on it. There has to be a restructuring so the educational institution can capitalize on the expertise that their instructors are providing to business.

The university faculty member expressed frustration with the way in which he was being asked to participate in, and provide input into, educational issues. When I asked him how cooperation between business and education might be strengthened, he replied:

> Well the most obvious way is you improve the communication. And so I think it would be a good idea for a university to have more of the business community involved in structuring course content, making decisions about where money has got to be spent, all that sort of thing. Having said that, it would have to be someone in business that had the time to do that sort of thing. And I obviously don't know very many people in business that have got time to do that sort of thing. That's the other difference between the university and business that I've really noticed, and that is I'll get a phonecall from the faculty or from the department: "We want to have a meeting. So can you come along?" "Sure I can come along. What time is it?" "We thought about two o'clock this afternoon and expect the meeting is going to take a couple of hours." Well, that's in the middle of my business day . . . I can't do that! So the only time I can do meetings is lunch time when I'm not working, or evenings. And people at university, that doesn't seem to fit into their work hours. So there's a little bit of a problem there. One of the biggest problems is communication. I'm just wondering how the university could, in some way, promote business; but then thinking after a bit, maybe that's not a good idea. Because unless you promote all business in general, you're going to show some sort of conflicts. It's a difficult one.

All of The Insiders concurred that cooperation could be strengthened by having business, as the end-users of education's product, become party to the design process and co-producers of the product, that is, curriculum development and enhanced cooperative education programs, respectively.

As the concluding question in this thematic area, I asked The Insiders, ***"How do you see business and education coming together in the future?"*** While this question revealed varying degrees of optimism, this is how participants expressed their thoughts on "future considerations" between business and education. According to the university lecturer:

> Well, my sense is that they're getting much closer together. I think, historically, that if you went back 25 or 30 or 35 years, business and education were quite close together. And then I think education got too wealthy and I think that what happened was educators said, "We don't have to pay any attention . . . we're our own world." And I think there was a real discontinuity and I think a lot of respect was lost on both sides. I think business got kind of fed up and had no time for educators, and educators said, "Oh, those guys don't know what they're talking about anyway," and there was a real discontinuity. I think in the last half-dozen years or so, as dollars have become tighter, what's happening is people are starting to recognize that there's value in working together and that they each have something to offer. So I think that's healthy. I also think that educators should make a real point of being realistic and practical, as opposed to just theoretical, and that they should be trying to get out into the workplace. And I think that they need to, where they can, try to find ways to bring people from the business community into the academic community. Not just people who have grown up as academics all their lives, but people who have the ability to teach and to do the other things that are necessary, but also have worked out in the real world and so on. And that becomes a very valuable thing, I believe. It's like in the school system -- the K to 12 system . . . you don't necessarily have to have been educated in the subjects that you end up teaching. You're educated to be an educator, as opposed to knowing something, and I think that's a mistake. So I think the same thing applies in that if you want to be able to relate to and understand business, it sure helps to go out and do it. I think, for example, that many educators would benefit from summer work

> experience programs in industry. And I think that that would be a really great thing to do -- go find an opportunity to connect with the business environment; it would be really healthy for both sides.

The university faculty member shared the following thoughts on this question:

> I think the communication has to be better; it also has to be different because each side has to know where the other side is coming from. And I don't think that's happening. I think the business guy is going to be a lot more hard-nosed when he's donating a certain amount of money to a scholarship at the university -- what's happening with that scholarship, how it's being spent -- than the university would be in using it. Flip that around and the university is going to be a lot more concerned with promoting the research and the publications and the stuff that will promote itself. As far as the university guys are concerned it's kind of an esoteric type thing, that is, "We're here and we know what to do, but just hand over the money and shut up, little man." That sort of thing.

The former high school teacher did not see business and education coming together in the future:

> I'd say no because the government will push us together to force privatization and support one another. Yeah, I would say that that's what we're probably going to be faced with.

Theme #4: Square Pegs In Round Holes

> "To live in dialogue with another is to live twice.
> Joys are doubled by exchange and burdens are cut in half."
> -- Wishart

The last three questions I asked of participants did not seem, to me, to fit thematically into one of the first three groups. While they are somewhat provocative questions, the responses to them comprised answers which were very interesting. The first question was, ***"In your opinion, are special interest groups a factor in relations between the business and education sectors?"*** One participant provided me with the following lengthy,

but comprehensive, response:

> Yes they are. There is concern that educators encourage challenges to industry's best interests. So, for example, you will find people who would argue that some of the academics at the university are very outspoken in their views and are extreme on one side, particularly the anti-business side, and this could be related to issues concerning the environment, or in terms of trying to continue to push or advocate social changes which industry isn't ready for, but is having to conform to . . . Affirmative Action is one of those. Unions, I think, are another issue. Also, educational institutions are viewed as being liberal, too liberal, and that makes it hard for business to deal with them because business is conservative. I think that when it comes to things like, how do I put this very carefully . . . I'd like to differentiate between respect for people versus Affirmative Action. I think companies in general would be relatively unhappy about Affirmative Action programs that say: You *have* to do things; you have to meet quotas; you have to chose people who might be ranked differently had you not taken certain factors into account. And suppose all these things you're told you have to do jeopardize the productivity and performance of a business, what can you do? I believe in respecting differences and recognizing the values that they can bring into an organization, and I think most companies do. But I don't believe in being told that I have to run my business this way, or that way. Unfortunately the public way of running organizations has begun to creep into private industry . . . why be private if you're forced to operate as if you were public? It kills your competitive edge as far as I can tell, and that's not conducive to functioning in a global marketplace. It ends up being more a function of the nature of the leadership in organizations. So some will be very diverse and open and accommodating, and others will be resistant and close-minded, etc. That's the way all people are, not just businessmen or educators. You could have a different CEO and the whole climate could change. For example, we're a technology business, but much of what we're doing can be used in many different ways, as most technology can. It can be used for very good things, or it could be used for very bad things. The question is, do we create an environment in which the choices are made from some kind of a moral social perspective, or from a personal gain perspective? And that again is just people . . . one leader is going to be very much oriented towards getting the biggest advantage, whatever it may be, at whatever it costs anyone else. Another would say, "No it's not right to do this. We've got to consider what we're doing and take these other

> things into account." So it really depends on the individual, I think. I also think, by the way, that education has a real role in bringing these issues to the table and having people confront them and understand their value sets; but I don't think they should be trying to create value sets.

While this was the most exhaustive answer, it must be noted that four of the five Insiders thought that special interest groups were a negative influence on the relations between industry and education.

The next question, ***"Do you think educational reform is important or needed?"*** got unanimous positive responses.

> Oh absolutely, yes. I think it's absolutely required. It's like any business, if you stay stagnant you'll disappear. You have to change with the country, with the world because now everything is global. I don't think many educational programs are geared to the global reality of today. When it comes to business you've got to start thinking global from day one. You've got to expand students' thinking beyond the small doors of small business because even if you're in a small business today you've got to think about who might out-produce you from another country. And that's tough, so tough, especially because you're small. And that's where I think business could get more involved with educational institutions, in international business programs especially. Education is a business today, as much as educators don't like to think that -- it is a business, and they protect their turf as all businesses do. There is no way that an instructor in the classroom, especially in the field of business, can keep up to the changing world as quickly as somebody who's working in that environment. It's a catch-22. I mean there is a certain amount of basics that you need, but there's a certain amount of worldliness that you need too. You can see the concerns from both sides. Reform has to start with the public schools or post-secondary institutions will have even greater problems. Post-secondary programs are only as strong as their "intake," and this is why it's going to suffer -- because it's intake is mediocre, at best. Post-sec's job is to graduate students because that's the business they're in, but unfortunately they produce graduates who are only half prepared.

Another participant did not mince words when he responded, "Yeah, obviously. Not only post-secondary. Right across the board."

Finally, I took the opportunity to ask these prominent and successful members of industry the question which grew into this doctoral dissertation on the nature and intent of business involvement in education. ***"What is your reaction to allegations by critics who claim that business' interest in education originates from the notion that students 'are the largest untapped consumer market in our society; the public education system is the largest public enterprise still to be privatized'?" (Barlow & Robertson, 1994, p.83)*** Here is what I was told:

> I would say that's an academic giving their opinion of what's happening. I think maybe I can see where that person is coming from, but I think they're wrong. The whole socialism, unionism, NDPism, all that stuff is just so . . . well it's been proven to be wrong. And it's been proven to be wrong a number of times now. And it should not be, but unfortunately it is, what's in control of the university and education, I think. And I think that's where the problem is. [I probed: If it's been proven to be wrong, why is it still in control?] Well because no one has tried to get rid of the stuff. I mean, you've still got tenure so you've got all the guys that have come up through the real reactionary times, the flower-power 60's when everything was peace and love and communes -- they're all in control at the moment. So until they've left you're not going to change it. Now the big problem is because they've been in control over a certain period of time now, and they've been in control of the curricula, you've got kids coming through now that basically have been indoctrinated with all this crap who will be the next generation teaching in the schools and universities to propagate yet more of this rubbish. And it's going to be a serious problem. It's like this whole atmosphere of political correctness that used to frustrate me a little bit when I used to read about it. It wasn't until I was connected with the university that I could see some of the nonsense that was coming down the pipe -- that was when I got seriously concerned. For example, my daughter will come home and talk about some of the politically correct stuff that she's being fed; luckily she's got the wherewithall to screen most of it, and a father that screens the rest of it if she's not bringing it up. There's a lot of reactionary stuff there I have a serious concern about. Not only is it affecting education, it's affecting health.

The former community college instructor said,

> It's probably true. I think that's absolutely true, and I know it's true. It's no different than if you look at what the US government is doing right now trying to fight against Microsoft's Bill Gates -- that is exactly what a lot of business' critics are trying to fight in their own schools. And I'm not saying it's wrong. But I think if you have a coffee mug on your desk everyday with a certain company's name it's going to become implanted in your mind. It's done on TV all the time. It's like always having Apple computers in your classroom . . . when you graduate you will want Macs. It definitely is an untapped consumer market . . . I agree with that statement. But I'm not saying that it's bad for business to tap into it. That's the business of business . . . to maximize market share. And if they can't create a niche for themselves they'll go belly-up.

The university lecturer thought the quote to be silly:

> Well I think that's silly, first of all. That's my reaction -- I think it's a silly statement. Students are definitely a resource; they're a key input to every business because businesses succeed on their intellectual capital. And their intellectual capital consists of the people they employ, what they know, who they know, what their networks are, and how well they use it. And that's really what it's about. So in that sense these resources are critically important. Now, in terms of privatized education, I think there's a role for a blend of educational facilities. I think there is a need for some which essentially have a large component of public funding in them, and those are obviously the K to 12 institutions. I think at the post-secondary level we have a need for some publicly funded institutions that provide broad-based general education and contribute to some of the professional and technical administrative personnel that we need. But now we get to my next point: I'm not an advocate of privatized education, but I'm a strong believer in the fact that there is a need for private education facilities who provide very narrow specific skills, and do it on a full cost-recovery basis. And they are the ones that should be dealing with, what I would call the real "market shift" stuff; so where there's a high risk, a high degree of change or whatever, that's where they ought to operate because they're much more flexible, they'll be able to adapt more quickly, they're not locked into union agreements or things which inhibit their ability to change rapidly according to market shifts in the economy.

Summary

As mentioned at the outset of this chapter, it was surprising to me that The Insiders would be the most vehement during my interviews with them on their perceptions as to the nature and intent of business involvement in cooperative education at the post-secondary level. Perhaps the one statement which single-handedly provoked the most contemplation and reflection on my part was the quote shared with me by the former university Dean; he told me that it was this quote which was the most reflective of, and relevant to, his success in business:

> "It is not enough that we do our best;
> sometimes we have to do what is required."
> -- Winston Churchill

The ambiguity contained in the latter part of Churchill's words left me wondering at what point does business "draw the line" with respect to doing what it feels is "required?" At the same time, The Insiders were adamant that, while they all felt business was doing what was expected, if not required, of it, education was unfortunately lagging behind in fulfilling its roles and responsibilities.

On the issue of business and education working together, the former university Dean expressed the sentiments of The Insiders when he stated,

> We need a number of educational representatives to talk to a number of business representatives, all willing to work on a non-confrontational project to try and get a marriage between industry and education. They need to TALK and try to find common ground. In order to understand your opponent, is it not best to walk a mile in his moccasins?

Worth mentioning again is that each of these participants HAS walked a mile in the moccasins of their "opponents," and therefore it may be inferred that their perceptions as to the nature and intent of business involvement in cooperative

education have provided an "insider" perspective on the issue of motive.

Regarding their expectations of a cooperative education program, a notable insight was put forth by the former community college instructor who said,

> I don't think post-secondary institutions realize the power they have in their hands by being government run post-secondary institutions . . . it gives them a lot of credibility, a LOT of credibility. It doesn't matter what country you go to . . . if you're affiliated with the University of Alberta or with Grant McEwan or with NAIT, immediately they will look up to you. So it's not hard to sell your services, but you've got to structure yourself in a way to capitalize on that.

Regarding Theme #1: Why Does Business Want To Be Involved In Cooperative Education Programs? All of The Insiders were aware of cooperative education programs, and all believed these tripartite arrangements to be of a "win-win-win" nature, that is, for the student, for education, and for business; however, The Insiders all expressed frustrations with educators' inability or unwillingness to "move significant distances very quickly." One of The Insiders felt passionately that ". . . I don't think they [educators] give a damn what we [business] care about . . ." All of The Insiders felt that they understood the concerns and needs of educators, as they all were or had been educators themselves at some point in their lives. The Insiders believed educators to be most concerned with a change in the status quo, the demand for accountability, and promotion/retention based on merit and value because this would mean "the shaking up of a comfortable, insular, and cloistered brotherhood;" that is, educators perceive business involvement as "a threat or an intrusion, and motivated by self-interest." The Insiders felt that educators were simply voicing anti-business sentiments to protect their own self-interests, with the former university Dean seeming the most concerned

about the proliferation of anti-business sentiment emanating from the educational system.

When I asked The Insiders whether cooperative education was a good vehicle for business to express its concerns and make an impact on education, not all believed that it was due to the relatively short time frame of its duration. Clearly the theme of short-term versus long-term was one that continued to resurface throughout this study, although the argument for short-term versus long-term depended upon the issue in question. Unanimously The Insiders emphatically agreed that there was consensus within their business sectors regarding the expectations of post-secondary education; also, they all expressed support for the idea of educators being required to complete a "business practicum" of sorts, and finding more ways to bring individuals from the business community into the academic community, particularly the classroom.

Regarding Theme #2: What Internal And External Considerations Influence Corporate Decision-Makers To Become Involved In Cooperative Education Programs? When asked what were the most significant factors influencing their decisions to participate in cooperative education, the primary factor cited by this group of participants was "professional responsibility;" time constraints ranked secondarily in importance.

Regarding Theme #3: Does Business Identify Its Goals As Being Short-Term or Long-Term With Respect To Its Involvement In Cooperative Education? The university lecturer made an observation so apropos to the perceived tension between business and education, both noted in the literature and in practice:

> Educators don't always agree with industry because we tend to take a very short-term view -- we want to solve today's problems. Educators say, "OK, but we're more concerned about the longer term, the future," and you sometimes get discontinuities between these two positions.

All of The Insiders thought business should be involved in education for (a) recognition as a good corporate citizen, (b) research for the future, and (c) the opportunity to influence the nature and quality of education being provided to students. This group of participants all felt that cooperation could be strengthened by having business, as the end-users of education's product, become party to the design process and co-producers of the product, for example, curriculum development and enhanced cooperative education programs; improved two-way communication was an "obvious" way to strengthen partnership arrangements.

The Insiders expressed varying degrees of optimism as to whether they saw business and education coming together in the future.

Regarding Theme #4: Square Pegs In Round Holes In this thematic category I included the responses I received to the more provocative of my interview questions; to recapitulate these answers as provided by The Insiders, again, it should be noted that I was surprised at the conviction in their responses.

All of The Insiders believed that special interest groups were a factor in relations between business and education, with four of the five participants in this group seeing special interest groups as a negative influence on those relations.

Each of The Insiders thought educational reform was "absolutely required," "right across the board."

In concluding my interviews with this group of participants, I asked for their reactions to some allegations made by critics of business involvement in education. Since their responses to this area of inquiry cannot be summarized without sacrificing meaning and nuance in the process, I would encourage the reader to revisit pages 76 to 77 to draw their own conclusions about what The Insiders had to say about their critics.

Chapter 5

"Reaction isn't action -- that is, it isn't truly creative."
-- Elizabeth Janeway

Analysis And Presentation Of Data

Group Two: The Multinationals

Introduction

As discussed at the beginning of Chapter 4, three classifications of participants emerged from the data as they were being collected. Chapter 5 focuses on those participants whose locus of operations were international. I have labelled this group The Multinationals, and it includes four participants who represent 27% of this study's findings. To ensure consistency in reporting between participant groups, I have presented the data in the same format and order as in Chapter 4; this allows for the comparisons of data to be made with more ease. However, The Multinationals will not be referred to according to their past or present operating capacities as were The Insiders, since this was done with the sole intention of differentiating from where in the educational system The Insiders had gotten their educational experience. The Multinationals have simply been referred to as Participants A, B, C, and D.

As a group The Multinationals were opinionated and more than happy to share their opinions with me. While some extremely strong and reactionary statements were made by this group, the inclusion of such statements is imperative to providing insight into their perceptions of the nature and intent of business involvement in cooperative education at the post-secondary level.

As I sat in the chrome, glass, leather, and marble anteroom waiting to be joined by Participant B, my instincts told me that I was about to be provided with an insightful interview -- more than two and one-half hours later the interview was over. As an appetizer to whet the appetite for hearing what The Multinationals had to say, the following quote powerfully summarizes a recurring theme of the interviews with these individuals:

> Some believe that the purpose of government is to provide jobs. Some believe that the purpose of business is to provide jobs. I argue that the purpose of neither is to provide jobs. Business doesn't exist to provide jobs. Business provides jobs because it needs to do that to get where it has to go. You will find in no company's mission statement that "Our vision is to provide jobs."

"Any idea seriously entertained tends to bring about the realization of itself."
-- Joseph Chilton Pearce

As with The Insiders, I began the interview process by asking each of The Multinationals about cooperative education and their expectations of a cooperative education program. On the topic of cooperative education, Participant B echoed the sentiments of The Multinationals when he stated,

> To me, co-op education would mean the ability of the prime users of the product, that being the business community or the employer community, working in partnership with those that produce the product -- if I could be so callous, Sandy, as to use the word "product" -- that is, the educational system . . . their working together cooperatively to ensure that those products (and I guess we all are products of the system in some way) are useful to those end-users that will eventually employ the knowledge that they bring, the creative thinking, and so on. So, to me, co-op education would be a partnership between the users and the producers of the people who will really move business forward.

On the same topic, Participant D articulated:

> I guess from my perspective, and the way we've used it, is that students are learning in two different methods cooperatively. They're learning the theory at the university in segments or chunks of time, and then after that they're going out into industry and

> utilizing what they've learned. Hopefully they're learning more on the job so that when they go back to the university they're that much further ahead than those students who just do the straight academic route. So it is really the education and business practical AND theory joined together into one that make, from my point of view, a much better grad or prospective employee coming out of that, i.e., much more knowledgeable, much more rounded.

When asked what his expectations of a cooperative education program were, Participant A relayed the following:

> I'm glad you asked that question specifically. My expectations of a cooperative endeavor would start with the Calgary business school philosophy, from the simplest expectation of no orange hair and the common courtesy of proper grammar. I would wish to see the understanding of basic business and economic theory, some understanding of history and the history of commerce, and the acceptance that some endeavors require actual effort, actual study, and even commitment to the "we" rather than the "me." I would certainly expect cooperative curricula to dispense with warm and fuzzy fluff courses, rewritten as necessary for current politically correctness, and imbue sound proven theory that has worked since the establishment of North America. I in no way imply a preference for Draconian English Boys' School practices, so caning is out; but expulsion should certainly be in, as should quantifiable accountability. It has long been my belief that it is a dereliction of parental and educational duty to make students find out when they're 21 that jobs will demand accountability, in measure, if not morals.

Participant B shared what his expectations of a cooperative education program were:

> To me cooperative education would involve business putting dollars into educational programs, but it would not be a fund that would grow without any involvement by business. I think what's key is that business has involvement, not only at the time of donation, but after also ensuring that those dollars are going to areas that, first of all, business supports philosophically, and secondly, feels reasonably confident that they are going to be used in the most effective way.

Theme #1: Why Does Business Want To Be Involved In Cooperative Education Programs?

"If you want to truly understand something,
try to change it."
-- Kurt Lewis

I asked this very question, that is Theme #1, of one of The Multinationals who had already broached the subject just as we were about to begin the interview process. He said,

> The primary reason for business involvement in education is to ensure that those who will be involved in business in the future and will, in fact, lead it into the future are prepared to do just that; and that they are prepared for the responsibilities of that involvement. And that, in my mind, is probably the overriding and most dominant reason for business to be involved in academia is to make sure, for the sake of the people and business, that they're adequately prepared for the tasks that will face them. The interesting thing is that people tend to impute minds and even souls to companies, and companies don't possess minds or hearts or souls. Those things reside only in the people. And so it's interesting that the demonization of a company takes place as though the company has grown a life of its own; and that can't be. But basically I think that one of the overriding motivators is for the sake of the people, to ensure that they are prepared for the sake of business, to ensure that there's a feed-stock of people coming through who are adequately prepared and are also quite excited about the world that they are going to enter. That, in my mind, would be the predominant reason.

On the topic of business-education partnerships and why his company was involved, Participant A summarized the sentiments of all The Multinationals when he stated,

> As with most international corporate entities who deal with the public as a primary market, industry-education liaisons enable us to be seen as caring, involved, and social corporate citizens. This raises not only visibility, but hopefully acceptance and profits.

As with Group One, several preliminary questions were asked of The Multinationals regarding their school-business alliances in order to understand the status of their cooperative education programs from an implementation perspective. The first questions I asked participants were, ***"As a businessperson, are you aware of cooperative education programs?"*** and ***"Have you ever been involved in a cooperative education program?"***, since their answers to these two questions served as the basis for the study. All of The Multinationals were aware of cooperative education programs, all were or had been involved in them, and in all four companies the cooperative program was an ongoing arrangement.

> I think when you look at cooperative education a number of years ago when that type of work-study experience became known and formalized -- I suspect it was done in many ways all along throughout the years -- but as it became known we became interested. Our interest is predominantly in the engineering area because of the fact that practical work experience is so critical in the development of an engineer in the post-secondary arena. We felt it was important that the individual NOT come out without any practical experience directed, at least loosely, toward the field of study. So I think that basic premise is really what spawned the co-op program in this company.

Due to his response to the previous question, I asked one participant to elaborate on his answer to the following question, ***"Have you ever been asked to become involved in a co-op program and chose not to?"***, to which he responded,

> Yes, only in that each year the U of A will contact us and ask us if we would take a student for four months or eight months, and yeah, there's been times that we haven't because we haven't had the time to sit down and think about what kind of a project we'd be able to utilize them on . . . where we'd utilize them. We've been so busy over this last number of years with growth and expansion that we just haven't had the time to figure out where we'd use them. So that's why we didn't. It was a matter of time, not money. And finding something that we can utilize them on, and provide the

> best experience from both our points of view. You bring a co-op student in that's in third year accounting or third year engineering and you want them to be doing something that's pretty worthwhile for them. And it takes somebody some time to sit down and figure out what the heck it is that they're going to do for the four or eight months that you're going to use them.

Participants were then asked ***"Are you aware of other businesses in your industry sector that are involved in cooperative education programs?"***, and three replied that they were aware of others, and one did not know.

The Multinationals were asked, ***"Let us now turn our minds to thinking more generally about business involvement in education. In pragmatic terms, what does 'cooperation' mean to you when we talk about cooperative ventures between business and education?"***

Participant B explained his thoughts and the reasons for them:

> Taking cooperation to a higher level, I would probably start with the world marketplace as an imperative. And it's fair to reveal a few biases just so that you have the context of where I'm going to come from. I tend to believe that the world marketplace will transcend most things that government tries to do or not do; and just to use a quick example, I think that protectionism, for example, is something that will be dealt with by the marketplace rather than by government deciding that protectionism isn't necessarily good. There are a host of examples around: Canadian content and things like that, that I think ultimately need to come undone. The other thing is provincial trade barriers, and this is a long way of getting around to your question . . . but to paint the context, provincial trade barriers, for example, I find it to be very curious when two provinces with a lower population than any of a number of U.S. cities will have two separate power companies for the provinces. They refuse to, cannot, blend together into a single power company; SaskPower and Manitoba Hydro would be two examples of that, and there's Ontario Hydro and Hydro Quebec. My belief is that, generally speaking, the forces of the world marketplace are eventually going to overtake anything that is hung onto by way of those types of barriers. Extending that then to the educational arena, I think that eventually the needs of the world

> marketplace are going to transcend any vision that, let's say, an educator may have about the pure definition of education as opposed to a usable definition of education. I think that the individuals coming out of the post-secondary system are going to HAVE to be able to contribute to, and to an extent, control the world marketplace. Therefore, if that thesis were to hold, then I think cooperation, getting back to the question directly, involves those who are immersed in what I'll call the "world marketplace community" imputing to those that are educating individuals to enter that community . . . imputing to them suggestions, advice, and all sorts of counsel with regard to the best direction for preparing the students to enter that marketplace. That could involve, then, advisory councils that would have business people involved, it could well involve programs like the co-op program that have largely the ability of the employer to infuse into the student their version of what the business world consists of, and so on. And then on the part of the educators it involves the ability to ensure that business does not become too focused on business only, or bottom-line only; that there is a need for probably research for the sake of things that business cannot see on the bottom-line today. And that balance, then, I think in an ideal world, is what cooperation is all about. The educators will be focused on the ultimate marketplace, but they also will be one of the checks-and-balances that will ensure that everything isn't only bottom-line driven. The business community will recognize that the educators have a role that goes beyond <u>their</u> bottom line, beyond business' bottom-line, and therefore are willing to accept ideas, thoughts, and input from the educational community. In my mind, that's what cooperation is all about. I don't see either being able to operate in isolation. And probably the biggest problem that I would see as a reverse of that utopia that I just described would be the situation where educators educate and business hires what's been educated, and that product is not prepared for, nor matched to, the marketplace that needs to be fulfilled.

Participant A expressed his thoughts on what cooperation meant to him when talking about cooperative ventures between business and education:

> True two-way functionality, probably unlike what business has experienced in the past, i.e., students being paired with a business in their relative sphere of interest, hopefully a business with enough extra time and personnel to periodically document a bit about the student's progress and experiences. Step two, having someone back at the school making me feel like my comments are

> being listened to regarding strengths and lackings in the student they've sent me. Without something being done with the suggestions from business, it seems to me largely a grand field trip operation.

Responding to the next question, ***"How well do you feel educators understand business' concerns and needs as employers?***, all participants can be paraphrased by the succinct response of Participant C, "They don't. I don't think they do at all. But I don't think they care to." The other three participants' sentiments are reflected by what Participant A had to say about educators' lack of business understanding:

> Not at all, in most cases. It appears that, largely speaking, education has internalized an intrinsic, inalienable value of whatever it is they decide to do, i.e., "We're the profs, we teach, therefore whatever we teach must be proper." The reality of students going through this house of mazes is that when they ARE finally spun out the other end, they're not appropriately equipped. Naturally education, being an inwardly-looking unionized environment, discourages change or deviation in a course to their benefit. Sadly I'm now inclined to view the education sector as having fewer professionals and more "organization members."

Another of The Multinationals stated,

> Not well. And I want to say that there are notable exceptions to that. I think educators are not business literate enough themselves, by and large. When they go on sabbatical they tend to go elsewhere in academia . . . to Australia or someplace like that. So they change their geography but they don't necessarily change or expand their level of exposure to the business world, for example. Some do. Some actually will move into the business world and then retreat back; and I hate to call it a retreat because it really shouldn't be used that way . . . allow me to rephrase that by saying they will return to the world of academia. I think, generally speaking, educators tend to move along career paths that don't lend well to their ability to know what business faces, and what it's literally like to be driven by shareholders, to be driven by the bottom-line, to be driven by the vagaries of the marketplace, and so on.

The last of The Multinationals commented that,

> In general, probably not well. I don't know how many of them ever go out to the business community and say, "This is what we're doing. What do you think?" The cooperatives, I think, do some of that, but apart from them, no they don't. You've got the deans of the departments and they're old-timers that have been around for a long time, and they've got their degrees, and that's kind of fed downward; and they continue to teach, and they're tenured -- "Don't touch me." That's another topic, but anyway.

Turning the question around, I asked, ***"How well do you feel business understands the concerns and needs of educators?"***, to which I heard variations in their responses which ranged from concern to scorn. Participant D felt that business probably didn't understand the concerns of educators: "With regret, probably not. Probably not well." Participant B believed that he did understand educator's concerns, but had his own concerns about their concerns:

> Yes I do. I absolutely can understand that, to an academian, the involvement of business could present, first of all, an intrusion; secondly, a threat, as well as a number of other things that could cause concern. And I understand where that would be coming from because the easy notion would be that business does not have pure motives in what it's doing . . . that it has only its own selfish motives in coming to academia. I think their concerns are valid but overdone, and in a world where checks-and-balances are necessary, it would be inappropriate for me to say that academia should be not concerned at all about the influence of business in the world of academics. But, I think, too, that the concern can be overdone to the point where it becomes stifling to the ability for a partnership to flourish between business and the academic world.

Participant A pointedly responded,

> How well should we need to understand their concerns? Education's sole function is to mold, motivate, and manage a marketable commodity: an adequately knowledgeable, employable, value-contributing member of society and the community. Students and the end-result employed graduate do

> not exist simply to give teachers a job to go to. That's where education may most be confusing their function. If the product doesn't work, or works poorly, send it back to R & D and fix it. This is how the world functions, and contrary to any platitudes about "feel-goodness" and self-esteem, it always will. By the way, the important "self-esteem agenda" will best be realized by empowering the student to succeed, not merely to accept.

When asked, ***"As a businessperson, what do you think are some of the concerns about business being involved in education, from educators' perspectives?"***, Participant C had a rather unique perspective on educators' concerns about business' involvement in education:

> They consider most of us in business to be some sort of ogre or bogeyman or whatever else, and they're protecting their turf. It's kind of a dirty world, you know . . . I mean being in business is dirty. Somehow it's not ethical. You see, the basic problem with any type of socialist thinking, even liberalist thinking if you will, is it reduces a certain percentage of the population to the lowest common denominator. That's fundamentally wrong because it doesn't provide any incentive for people to achieve their potential. I don't care how dumb you are or how smart you are, each one of us has a potential level that we should be encouraged to exceed, whether that's in business or in education or anything else. The Teachers' Association, for instance, stops that, don't they? The political aspects of it drop everybody to the lowest common denominator; there are exceptions, of course, but generally speaking it's a mediocre type of . . . it's a unionized type of environment which is that way. Well then there isn't much doubt that mediocrity is going to be passed on to the students they're teaching. That's a tragedy. If I had a gifted kid, I'd put him in a private school because otherwise his or her achievement level would be stilted because the public system isn't set up to encourage excellence or achievement. It depends on what you use as a ruler for achievement, but I don't think the Mother Teresas of this world were geniuses. I wonder how high their IQs were, and many others. I mean, Bill Gates is obviously a very intelligent man and so is Warren Buffet, but I'll bet neither of them would have made the genius list. It think it takes drive and a will and determination. You know, if you're pushing a broom, you should be the best broom-pusher in the world, if that's what you want to be. If you're not taught to aspire, you don't get the most potential out of the individual, society, or the country. Canada has the

> wherewithall to be one of the major countries in the world, and we've been gifted with the fact that we've got so many resources. The resource base per capita has allowed us to have probably the second-best lifestyle in the world, arguably maybe even the first, without having to work for it. We were born into a rich family, sort of thing, and there's been very little incentive for Canadians to achieve anything. We can afford to sit back and be coddled.

The Multinationals all concurred with the thoughts of Participant A:

> I would fully expect that education will be rightly horrified by exactly those things of which they should be concerned, for example, a change of the "cushy" status quo, the end-user/taxpayers' demands for accountability, use/promotion/retention based on merit and value, fewer jobs in fluff faculties, and, in general, a damn good shaking up of an insular, cloistered brotherhood; and, I might add, a largely job protected, well compensated brotherhood which more and more freightpayers see as not giving back value.

Participant D expanded on this theme:

> The fact that it's been their domain for so long. We're business and they're education, and they and the government have determined what the faculties will teach, what the curricula are, and who needs to know what without going to the users of their students, i.e., business. They don't say, "This is what we're going to teach them, what do you think? Does that make sense? Does it help? Do you need this? What else do you need?" So we're kind of encroaching on their areas of expertise in terms of them thinking that they know what's best. Now, here's business coming back and saying, "Well, that's not any good. You should be doing this; you should be doing that." That isn't very well received sometimes. Teachers are very narrow in their view of the world. They're academics, and they're academics by the way that they think. They don't think about business practically; and to be able to get out into the real world for a period of time before they go back and try to teach in the universities is tough to do. It's just like me trying to tell my superiors how to handle a problem, or talking to the union about some of the issues on the floor -- if I'd never been there they'd say, "Don't talk to me about that because you've never been there," and it's the same with the academics. How can you teach the "real world" when you've never been there?

I then asked The Multinationals the same question but from yet another angle, that is, ***"As a businessperson, what do you think are some of the concerns about business being involved in education, from the government's perspective?"*** It was in response to this question that I first heard the word "agenda" used, into which I probed.

> From the government's perspective? I guess I wonder if they would see us as using the students as a cheap source of labour, first of all. That might be a concern. As well, we're going to be seen as trying to push our agenda into the universities. I mean, if our agenda and theirs is going to differ about what we want these people to be taught or graduate with, that might be a concern for them. I'd think that any help they get they would welcome. We would probably end up, through donations, funding more of education, but if we get more into the funding then certainly we're going to be concerned about what we're after. So I don't think that the government's going to give that up. [Probe: You used the word "agenda." Do you think business has an agenda?] If there's an agenda I would say it's that we want students to be coming out with the knowledge and the information that they need, and that we need. And if that's an agenda, then, yeah, I guess we have one. I look at an agenda as being something negative, and I wouldn't say that we have a negative agenda at all! Agenda, to me, connotes an ulterior motive -- I don't know what it would be, but I'd like to hear what they think it might be. We want to control the world, right? . . . that is SO simplistic.

A slightly different perspective was proffered by Participant A:

> The government would rightly fear having to give value and provide accountability for its involvement. It can't be forgotten that the majority of government at a federal level comes from the legal profession. Unfortunately I have very little faith in a government of lawyers working very hard for the benefits of any but themselves. I look to the provincial bodies to kickstart and orchestrate these changes. Naturally a party in power will be concerned with the preservation and maintenance of its nest, whether we're talking federal, provincial, municipal, fraternal, union. Those inevitably paying the freight and bearing the brunt must take responsibility for spearheading improvement.

On the issue of privatization, The Multinationals were not as vocal as were The Insiders, however, none saw it as being problematic. For example,

> Well, of course I don't agree that health care is two-tiered, and I don't think education is two-tiered. As far as I'm concerned, if you're satisfied with the status quo, in either education or health care -- if you're satisfied with mediocrity then that's what you go with. But in terms of two-tiered, I mean, if you're looking at health care . . . if you have some malaise that wasn't easily cured locally, or you weren't prepared to wait your turn in queue where everybody else is lined up, you should have the option, if you wish, to sell your house and go to the Mayo Clinic or Johns Hopkins and get it fixed; that should be your decision. Same thing if you have a kid . . . if the kid isn't being sufficiently challenged in the public system, it should be your prerogative to have them challenged wherever you wish to have that done . . . and you'll have to make sacrifices accordingly. There's a safety net to catch you if you stumble and fall, but you don't go crawling around on your hands and knees in the net . . . if you do you never get anywhere. So I don't like the two-tiered thing. I mean, if I don't want to wait six months for an MRI and I'm willing to do down and pay "a grand" for it, well that's fine. I might have to sell a car to do that, but that should be my choice. So I don't like this two-tiered crap. I remember when we built the Royal Alex Hospital -- I was just out of school -- and it was operated by one doctor, and he was a medical doctor and he was administrator of the hospital. Well, today there's something like 35 administrators. What we've done with the system is we've built in another bureaucracy to cover another bureaucracy, you see. But that's not your mandate; your mandate is the education system, but there's sure a lot of parallels. I don't think it's a two-tiered system and it wouldn't bother me if it was.

Moving along in the interview process, The Multinationals were asked, ***"Is cooperative education a good vehicle for business to express its concerns and make an impact on education?"***, to which three of the four responded that it was.

> Sure it is. Again, it gets us closer to education, and it provides us with an opportunity to give feedback to the faculties about things that they could and should be doing . . . and they could do the same in return.

Another participant stated,

> Absolutely. Isn't this exactly what I've been responding to for the last several questions? The clear damage of the years of taught theory versus practicality, brave new world versus old world, demonstrate that while the world changes, business has and always will -- in fact, jobs of any nature -- require competence in the "3Rs." How can academics call themselves educators when almost universally overlooking something so damn basic? I want to clarify something I said a statement or so back: If education status quo is fine as it is, why is business complaining about the quality of the product? And why have we felt compelled to do so for some time now? I see this study as one designed to address the needs of graduates ill-equipped, in some cases unequipped, to function and add value to many many businesses in many industries. The perception, and often the reality, is that graduates with four years of higher education often expect to start at senior management compensation without so much as a week's experience. They may come equipped having memorized the platitudes of many great dead thinkers, but unequipped to write an approach or thankyou letter. Do they know anything of world, natural, or business history? Has my 23 or 25 year old hotshot employee any knowledge of 1929, 1974, 1987? They can't have any life experience, so what viable historical knowledge have they been taught?

"Is there consensus within your business sector community regarding the expectations of post-secondary education?" Each of The Multinationals felt that this consensus revolved around a perception, on the part of business, of an "anti-business" sentiment emanating from the educational sector. As well, all four participants felt there was consensus within their industry sector regarding its expectation that students coming through the education system should have a solid grounding in the basics -- the "3Rs;" as Participant B put it, it was a matter of going "back to the future," and he explained his reasoning:

> As a parent of four children, I will speak only of my own experience and that is that my primary concern has been to know how my kids are being prepared for the life that they're going to face in the

> working world. And I haven't had them in private or charter schools or anything like that -- they've gone through the public school system. But I've taken issue with a number of things that have crept into the public education system at all levels. I reckon that if we were to turn back the clock to the point where reading, writing and arithmetic were taught, and education and academia accepted that as their primary responsibility, I think we'd be better off. But we get so wrapped up in the notion that we've got to teach kids self-esteem . . . you've got to have self-esteem. Well, you can't butter a child with self-esteem and hope that it's going to soak in. You can't have them repeat 40 times over, "I am a good person, and I am loved" and expect that self-esteem is somehow going to spring out of that. Self-esteem comes from accomplishment. And if you focus kids on those small successes and accomplishments that they can feel good about, you won't ever have to teach them a course on self-esteem. But we spend so much time worrying about whether kids have enough self-esteem that we seem to think that if we wish they had self-esteem, or tell them that they do, they will! One of my mantras is "Wishing it don't make it so." And that's the case with self-esteem. And if big business is being accused of trying to destabilize public education, I would say destability is good then because we're trying to return, I think in some ways, back to the future. Go back to more of the basics and get away from this notion that education seems to have gotten along, and that is that there are no absolutes . . . value systems float freely, untethered to anything, and kids determine what their own value systems are because there are no rights or any wrongs. That's wrong. That's wrong. And I think THAT contributes to an unstable society. And so, no, I think what business seeks to do is to ensure that kids are getting from education the piece of life that they are in need of from education, and that is the teaching of skills that generally are deficiently taught in the home.

This same theme was echoed by the other Multinationals:

> I can't speak for my particular sector but having worked in several different sectors of business, a common denominator has always been, "Wasn't this person taught to read and write? Didn't they learn how to spell? Have they never picked up a history book?" In my experience all sectors of employers, universally and rightly, expect functional business competency. Oddly enough, in today's

> instructional climate this even includes being able to add without a calculator. Actually, it appears the trades are often the most functionally equipped. The apprenticeship aspect -- the instruction and application -- where applicable, may be a substantial factor.

Participant D addressed what one of The Insiders referred to as "soft skills:"

> I'm sure there's a very common thread through all of the business groups as you talk about education and universities and what they're teaching and what they're not teaching. And I think a little more about rounding out a student, and what companies need and what they look for in a grad; yeah, there's a lot of the theoretical and the basics and the background, but there's also a number of skills that we look for -- teamwork, coping, how to deal with stress. If they could do something around teaching those kinds of basic everyday performance skills at universities, I think that would go a longer way to rounding out the student. More human relations kind of stuff . . . there's a lot of that that you use on-the-job and in everyday life. For example, conflict resolution skills . . . everybody can use that kind of information.

Theme #2: What Internal And External Considerations Influence Corporate Decision-Makers To Become Involved In Cooperative Education Programs?

> "We succeed in enterprises which demand the positive qualities we posses, but we excel in those which can also make use of our defects."
>
> -- Alexis de Tocqueville

In an attempt to understand motive, or the desire to become increasingly involved in education, I asked The Multinationals questions about the internal and external considerations influencing these corporate decisions. My first question was, ***"How important is previous world experience, or work-based learning, for the graduates you hire?"*** Three of The Multinationals stated that it was "very important." ***"What were the most significant factors influencing your decision to participate in***

cooperative education programs?", to which Participant A replied:

> They were probably two-fold: (1) the company's long tenure in that community (100 years), and (2) the number of second generation employees, either summer workers or full-time. Additionally, the company president had himself risen from the position of stockboy some 40 years prior, and was on a number of civic councils, as well as the local university board.

On the other hand, Participant B captured the sentiments of all four Multinationals in his response:

> Probably the most significant one was that it would provide us with a view of individuals in their process of development, and not only at the conclusion of their educational experience. It would give us the ability to benefit from new ideas coming through the educational system. It would allow us to do that in such a way that neither the company nor the student had any ongoing indebtedness or obligation at the end. And so it really is a good arrangement to look at a person that we may or may not hire in the future, but at a minimum it would bring to us a glimpse of what's happening in the world of development of the individuals; and what sorts of things the educational system is giving them, what sorts of things it isn't giving them. And so that, to me, is what's really intriguing -- is the ability to look at people as they develop rather than at the one point of conclusion in their development.

"What have been some of the challenges of being involved in cooperative education?" Participant D didn't feel that they had encountered any challenges with their cooperative education involvement: "From my point of view there haven't been any challenges aside from getting the managers to come up with something that we can use the co-op student for. That's probably the biggest challenge." Participant B had the following to say in response to my question on the challenges of cooperative education students:

> Probably some of the challenges are finding individuals with the right level of interest in working in this business as they develop. Another challenge, I guess, would be coming around to the notion that we probably will not hire all of the people that we have engaged in the cooperative experience, realizing that there will be some that fit and some that don't. I think we've learned that we

> have to be very open to the notion that we may have someone as a co-op student, for example, for two years consecutively and not hire them ultimately, and we're prepared for that because sometimes what the co-op experience reveals is that there isn't a fit -- and that can be revealed to the company and it can also be revealed to the student. So those are a couple of the challenges.

Not one of The Multinationals or The Insiders made reference to the cost, that is, the dollars and cents associated with being involved in cooperative education programs, until Participant B addressed the issue of cost from a long-term perspective:

> Probably the greatest cost would involve creating positions that didn't exist before -- incremental positions that are new. And so that's something that we have had to wrap our arms around, and that is that we will have positions that would not have existed before . . . they are incremental, there's no hiding from that. And there is a cost associated with those. The long-term view is that the cost is well worth it, but it is something that, in dollar terms, is certainly measurable. In terms of other costs, I guess you could probably say there's some risk of diversion, of people's focus in the various areas as they seek to help develop a co-op student. There probably is something to be said for the notion that a fully degreed individual may do better, and be better prepared to step right in, and therefore we accept that the co-op student is often going to be someone whose maturity level and level of development, overall, is lower than someone who's concluded their post-secondary education. But again those, I think in my mind, are well balanced off by the benefits of looking at people early, giving them a chance to explore the world of business and decide for themselves what fits and what doesn't, while secondarily giving us the ability to look at certain individuals with an eye towards the future.

And Participant D thought that the biggest cost was ". . . probably the time. Yes, that would be the biggest cost. And that, again, is probably part of the reason why we're not as involved as we could be at times." Participant A supported the thoughts of the previous participants, but he was more impassioned about the reasons why:

> The costs of doing it are relatively minor and inconsequential. The costs of NOT doing it I see as huge. Left unattended there will be no "new guard" to step in and maintain commerce as it is today. We've already experienced most of a generation of undertraining or, at the very least, "wrong thinking" or anti-business education. Left unattended, who will there be to step into the places of current individual managers, except for foreign ownership? Within another decade or so many of the "old guard" will be retired or dead, and foreign ownership will make us serfs in our own land.

Flipping the question around, I asked, ***"How has your involvement in cooperative education programs been of value to your organization?"***, to which The Multinationals all agreed that it enabled them to "preview what the university was turning out."

> It was of value specifically because it showed us the substance and keenness of one student, and the comparable distance the bootstraps of another would have to be pulled up before becoming of any substantial value as a workforce participant. While these two examples were very young adults, and only two examples, they exhibited probably a textbook scope of what may lie out there as a future expectation of employee competency. Looking back on the two experiences, we probably couldn't have requested test subjects of such disappointing and divine qualities. In order for industry to maintain a future in "the game," endeavors such as this co-op experience are but one way that we can groom, influence, and attract ongoing "farm teams."

Theme #3: Does Business Identify Its Goals As Being Short-Term Or Long-Term With Respect To Its Involvement In Cooperative Education?

> "The future is made of the same stuff as the present."
> -- Simone Weil

As with The Insiders, here I was looking for future considerations that The Multinationals or their employing organizations might have had regarding their involvements in cooperative education programs. Since the basic premise of

their involvement in education could be interpreted to mean that participants thought business *should* be involved, I asked them directly, ***"Should business be involved in education?"*** and ***"What do you see as the 'business' between business and education?"*** As anticipated by this point in the interviews, all of The Multinationals thought that business has to become more involved in education:

> How can business NOT become involved in education when faced with the other worldly liberalism and, factually speaking, near socialist nonsense being fed, not only to our students, but worse, to the students of education! Over the past 20 years a new crop of idealistic pedagogues has been bred -- over-unionized, over-theorized, and far too "under-practicalized." Personal example: Thanks to whole language I have a 12-year-old who reads at perhaps an eight-year-old level. How can business think of NOT being involved in the correction of this? Academia won't . . . probably can't. The recipients of their product now must also become a co-producer of the product.

Participant D responded to the first question from a more technological perspective:

> I think they should be involved to the extent of insuring that the education people know what it is that we need. If there are things that are changing out there in the world, in our business, and if our students are coming out of a specific institution, perhaps then that institute really needs to know what's changing out there in our world so they can better meet what we're looking for. I think about the mechanics we have. When you think about a heavy duty mechanic, you think about a "grease monkey" -- he's out there, he's pulling wrenches and changing tires, and all that sort of stuff. By today's standards, our pieces of equipment have got more computerization on them than the Apollo mission did in 1967. So the world of the heavy duty mechanic is changing, and the institutes better know that, otherwise they're not doing anything to help us have mechanics of the future. The technology today . . . our mechanics that are out in the field at customer sites troubleshooting a problem with a new piece of equipment aren't listening for clunks and bangs and wheezes and things; they're taking a laptop computer and they're plugging it into the

> equipment and they're running a troubleshooting program through the equipment. The computer diagnoses some of the problems, what the settings are at or whatever, but who's operating the computer? Our mechanics definitely need computer knowledge and skills. If you're not computer literate in the 90s and into 2000, it's going to be worse than being illiterate in the 60s.

Regarding their perceptions of the business between business and education,

The Multinationals' perspectives were comprehensively summarized by what

Participant B had to say:

> The business between industry and education, I think, would involve first of all the investment of capital on the part of business for a number of reasons. Let me take a stab at what they may include. The least noble, probably, is being recognized as a corporate good neighbor; that would be one reason for business to invest in education -- so that they would be recognized as a corporate good neighbor. In these days of what's called a balanced scorecard, some companies have even gone to the point of calling it a "triple bottom-line" -- where they promote the notion that you need a financial or fiscal bottom-line, you need an environmental bottom-line, and you need a social bottom-line. Those three things. I do not subscribe, by the way, to the triple bottom-line because I feel that those are baked together better than that. But I know there is that trend of thought. So for a company then to be involved in investing dollars from the revenues of their business in education could be done for that reason -- to be looked at as a good neighbor. In this day and age it is almost the price of entry, by the way, to be regarded as a corporate good neighbor. There are very few successful companies who have a zero focus on public affairs and on good neighborhoodship; almost every successful company will have that component baked in. But never to the point where that desire alone begins to overtake the business. So that would be one reason: it is just good social responsibility and recognition. The second reason, I guess, would be the reason, again, for business to invest in education and that is for research for the future. I think there is a need for academia to be utilized for what it does very very well, and that is it provides the opportunity for research to go on in whatever subject it may be, whether it's in business trends, demographics, or whether it's in some new high-tech thing, new micro-chips for the future. I think there is that need that business, on its own, is not very effective at. So that would be another reason. Probably the third leg of the stool is making sure that

> there is an opportunity to influence the nature of education that's being provided to the students. So those would be the three things that I see on the side of business as being reasons to invest, literally dollars, into education. Reasons for education, then, to accept those dollars, in my mind, would mirror those. Certainly mirroring the notion that education, the world of academia, desires to provide students who will be productive in the world that they're going to enter. And even if they don't enter the world of business, let's say they enter the world of government, business literacy is more and more also becoming an imperative in government. There isn't the ability to be so divided anymore in this marketplace. So I think educators then have an imperative also to accept the help, as it were, from business. But I think a two-way relationship where business and education work as partners, not as servant-master or anything like that, is probably, in my mind, approaching the ideal where educators desire to produce products that will be usable to business, or least literate in business. Business respects that they are not able to do what education can do by itself.

To the question ***"How might cooperation between business and education be strengthened?"***, all of The Multinationals expressed that cooperation could be strengthened by having business, as the end-users of education's product, become party to the design process, or co-producers of the product; all felt that the required learning and training was not being provided by educational institutions. Participant A expressed his thoughts on this question:

> Have businesspeople, as the end-users, become party to the design process. Business, as a community member, should have every reason to be concerned and involved in the developmental process of students. Business, to my mind, should be involved in setting up particular faculties or chairs or campuses such as the Calgary business school. And we should be vocal, or at least public, about why we're putting our funding where we are. We should hold press conferences about it just as the teachers' associations do. We should feel free to comment on our dissatisfaction with particular post-secondary procedures -- for example, a post-secondary faculty or tenure is an appointment, not an anointment.

Participant D felt that improved communication was key to strengthening relations between business and education: "Ongoing dialogue and communication. It's almost like doing a needs analysis: You come out and find out what you need, and then work on it together. But there's got to be improved communications." Participant B argued a case for the need of secondments of both industrialists and educators into each other's domain:

> I think by a willingness on both sides, and a mutual respect on both sides, to be able to say that business has respect for those who have worked in the world of academics. Those in academia also have respect for those who have worked in business. I also think that more crossing and exchanging of ideas, if not people, would also be tremendously helpful in this effort -- secondments of businesspeople into academia. There are examples of that now, but perhaps not enough. And I think that in the reverse, having academians move into the world of business on a secondment basis would be important so that they can see what a budget cycle looks like . . . what kind of forces there are at play in the world. Much of what happens, I think, in academia is driven by things that are artificial to the world of business. The imperative to be published, to a researcher, to be published is the ultimate -- sometimes it even supersedes the need for usefulness and accuracy. I'm not saying that's bad because it's important to have those things known. But to have an individual whose whole focus has been on being published move into an arena where the focus has nothing to do with that, but has everything to do with making a business run, I think would be really important and valuable. So I think more crisscrossing, more secondments, and certainly more dialogue would help this. The notion that the two sides should be in one another's backyard more often is a healthy one, I think. Junior Achievement has been criticized because it moves into the grade eight/nine levels and talks about business; they bring in speakers in junior high classes and talk about business. It's been criticized as being probably a lot of the things that are spoken of in Class Warfare, but there's no doubt in my mind that it's helpful. And I reckon that there's even a chance that some of the teachers that have to audit the lecture by way of their need to be in the room might pick up a few things along the way.

My conversation with Participant A lead me to ask him, ***"What do you perceive to be some of the advantages of business being involved in education, from a short-term perspective as well as a long-term perspective?"***, to which he responded,

> Advantages from both a short-term and long-term perspective would be the chance to be involved in the implementation and day-to-day assistance of a very necessary progression of growth. It has to be done sometime, why not now? It will always be my preference to be involved personally or through business rather than being handed whatever academia says is the finished product.

As the concluding question in this thematic area, I asked The Multinationals, ***"How do you see business and education coming together in the future?"*** This is how participants expressed their thoughts on future considerations between business and education; again varying degrees of optimism were reported. According to Participant A: "I see business, perhaps by sector, supporting faculties cooperative with their efforts. I certainly agree with business' right to have accountability for dollars contributed. The public demands accountability, why not business?" Participant B spoke of the comfort in the status quo:

> There has to be trust -- trust that the other side is not doing things that are only self-serving. So, with mutual respect and trust, then, there's a chance that this partnership could become more cohesive. Without those things there is no amount of effort that will avail anything -- it's just not going to overcome the lack of those things. But respect and trust are the things that have to be built. What's going to be needed to do that? I think probably, in my mind, education/academia will have to see that there's an imperative to change. The status quo is a place we all like to reside, and if it's comfortable . . . we are creatures of inertia; objects at rest tend to remain so, and objects in motion tend to remain so. We are creatures that are captive to that physical phenomenon, and I think that the more the status quo is comfortable for the world of the academian, the less likely it is that

> they're going to view change as desirable or welcome. The more that that imperative becomes obvious, the more willing, I think, they will be to change. What will create that imperative? Back to my theory: The vagaries of the marketplace and the financial world that surround us. It will literally become impossible for the world of academia to continue to flourish, or maybe even to exist in some cases, without the recognition of a need to change. And so that, I think, is what's going to happen because, again, the status quo is so comfortable that we just don't -- as a family of people -- we just don't tend to look for things that are more painful than what we are experiencing right now, provided we're reasonably comfortable.

Participant D addressed the issue of ulterior motive:

> I think it's improving, but it's slow . . . it's getting there. I mean, a few years ago the co-op program wasn't around. And I think it's improving and I think it'll continue to improve as long as the educators, I guess, see that we don't have an ulterior motive. And if what they're putting out is meeting our needs, then that's great; if not, then come out and find out why it isn't. And again that goes back to the communication issue. But I think it's improving, but it has to go a lot further. Everybody's busy, so everybody's saying, "Well OK, they haven't talked to you, but have you talked to them?" It becomes a catch-22. Somewhere this circle has to be broken, and somebody's going to have to put a program or process together to get us in the same room and say, "OK, what do you need?"

Participant C did not see business and education coming together in the future for the following reasons:

> Well, I don't see it happening, Sandy. I would like to think it was going to happen. I mean, if we're talking higher education . . . if you're talking university . . . if business was funding university, and the characters who are running the university were answering to business, then they would obviously be capitalistic in some of their leanings, or would at least understand them so that the product that they'd be putting out would be able to be utilized by business. I don't think business is going to change because the fact of the matter is that businesses like ours, we compete at an international level. We're speaking the language of business, whether it's in France, Germany, New Zealand, U.S., or Canada -- wherever we are. We're going to continue doing it that way, the way it works; we aren't going to change. What has to change is education.

Theme #4: Square Pegs In Round Holes

"The change of one simple behavior can affect other behaviors and thus change many things."
-- Jean Baer

As with The Insiders, I asked The Multinationals three questions which did not fit thematically into any of the first three groups. The first of these more provocative questions was, ***"In your opinion, are special interest groups a factor in relations between the business and education sectors?"*** The issue of special interest groups was not a serious concern for The Multinationals, and three of them concurred with the following: "Not from what I've seen so far. Not in my experience." Rather than special interest groups per se, Participant A described what he saw as three distinct groups within the education profession:

> The teaching unions and associations understandably band together to sustain their positions, like any lobby or special interest group. Agreeing openly to change would be admitting to an existing problem, wouldn't it? I see three main groups in the educational ranks: (1) those educators who are new. They're eager, bright-eyed, and hopeful. They've yet to see results of what they do; (2) a second group is the "old guard" involved in policy-making and mystique management. They know what's good, are maybe close enough to retirement, and work to maintain the "as-is;" and (3) a third group is aware something isn't working but feel powerless to buck the associations or endanger their careers in an effort to change things; these are the ones who leave.

Participant B spoke of his dislike for unions:

> Yes I do. And again just so that there's no pretence, my bias is clearly away from things of that nature. I tend to view those as an intrusion. Coming from the States, I watched the onset of Affirmative Action, I've watched its demise in many areas, and I think that it truly can be an intrusion. I will, briefly, if you don't mind, pontificate on the subject of unions because I feel very strongly about it. Unions had a role once. In the days when abuses of the worker were common, unions had a reason to be. I argue that unions have less and less a reason to be today and, in

fact, represent an impediment to the proper treatment of workers because more and more the concept of "just reward" for work is what is going to have to rule. Unionism, by its very nature, argues against that. The ability of business to properly reward their workers is impeded by the presence of a union that says that everybody is going to be treated the same. So the reason for unions to be has drifted away with the sweatshops, generally speaking. And in today's world there's no question in my mind that unions represent more of an impediment, and I hadn't thought of it in the context of education, but probably an impediment there as well, rather than an enhancer to progress as we go forward. I think that unions in the context of educational unions are, without question, an impediment to the best and the brightest being able to progress. Generally I think one of the mantras going forward in business and must also be present in academia, is that the best and the brightest are those who lead and then move forward. When one cannot possibly, even if they are the best and the brightest, move forward, there's a serious demotivator in place that says, "Why be the best and the brightest when average is good enough?" So then we have this central tendency whereby everybody tends to cluster around a very average place. Having never experienced the world of tenure and things like that, and knowing that my perspective is probably somewhat ill-informed because I've never lived it myself, I feel that, in this world today, that kind of protection isn't afforded to anyone. And so in business there is no such thing, other than through unionism. The interesting thing is that in business the concepts of tenure and protection by unions only exists up to a certain level; in academia and government it goes right to the top. Tenure and seniority contribute more to the demise of those that think they are being protected than anything else -- because the best and the brightest will NOT be bottled up. If the best and the brightest are bottled up by things such as these, they will leave . . . they'll go elsewhere. And the result of that is that, with the best and the brightest being stifled to the point where they can't stay in government or academia, they'll move into business . . . where else would you go? And so then educators, by virtue of doing something that they think is so important to them as a protective measure, are placing themselves at a greater and greater disadvantage because the best minds won't be there -- they will have migrated over to business, which is one of the last avenues for progression. So that's the way it is, and as that happens you have a natural "brain drain" that migrates away from academia, if that's where it is, or government. And then those entities become less and less equal players in this partnership just by virtue of the quality, or lack of it,

> of the people that get left. We could get into an enormous discussion over left-wing and right-wing issues and so on, and you probably have suspected by now which end of the spectrum I reside in. The irony and hypocrisy of the left-wing movement is that free speech exists only within very defined areas, and outside of that it's not appropriate. And so those who tend to talk the most about the freedom of speech are really those who are the least willing to accept what freedom of speech really implies.

The next question, ***"Do you think educational reform is important or needed?"***, to which The Multinationals unanimously responded in the affirmative. Participant A had only this to say:

> A needless question, but let me ask if you think it's important to correct a wrongdoing or restructure inadequacies? Education is not, to me, a one-time thing. If not entirely repeated throughout life, it will at least be built upon. Without a solid base any structure will eventually founder.

On the issue of educational reform, Participant B made several interesting comments:

> I think that my answer will not change anything about the direction things are going, and that is the trend of government being less and less able to provide for the funding needs of education will continue; there's no doubt about it. I go back to my comment about the imperatives of the world marketplace: Even if government wants to continue to do all the things that it can do, they're going to find, whether they want to or not, that they will not be able to do all of those things. So fund-raising will become necessary in the academic world, in my mind. Business will have to participate in that. No matter how pure and clean from business the world of academia wishes to remain, the marketplace won't allow that to be. And I can understand how there could be a struggle in the minds of some that money from business is tainted money . . . it's somehow not clean. It should come from the government and then it's been filtered through a series of screens that make it clean, even though it came from where -- the pockets of individuals in business to begin with. At least, they think, if it comes through government it's filtered and I can drink it as an academian. That's my thought. But when it comes direct from business it's somehow polluted with this notion that business is only motivated by its own greed. I can understand how some

could think like that. But the reality of the world is that it is not going to be possible for the pure -- if we accept that notion -- funding only to come from government for academia. It can't happen because government is not going to have the capacity to do that. And therefore I think it's going to happen no matter what anybody says. Educational reform, especially in respect to fund-raising, will happen, must happen, and therefore we conclude that if it is going to happen, it is then our imperative to do it correctly between business and education. And that I think, frankly Sandy, is one of the points of your study that really intrigues me -- and that it touches on a nerve that really exists, I think, between people who wish that business didn't have to be involved in the funding of education. But wishing won't make it so. And so it's going to happen, and I think the collective responsibility then becomes to do it correctly and properly, and make sure that no one interest dominates. Educators are bright people -- they must understand that government doesn't generate any money. Government is an acceptor and redistributor of money . . . not all that terribly efficient, either, in many cases. But the money comes from the taxpayers, which are the individual and the business. That's where the money comes from. The fact that it is filtered through government doesn't change the fact that the government didn't create it. The problem really is this: Because the money has been filtered properly, in their minds, by the process of government which makes it anonymous, which makes it pure, which makes it "no strings attached," and therefore not really self-serving. And maybe that model, if we were to redesign this world around us, would be an ideal one. But again I go back to this basic bias that the marketplace will not let that happen. The marketplace WILL transcend what government wants to or doesn't want to do. And that, I think, we're starting to see in more and more places. And I really think that if nothing else comes out of all this other than the notion that this WILL be done, business WILL be involved in education, that it is one of the immovable facts of life, then how can it BEST be done? Under what framework can it best be done? Clearly the cooperative framework. Because the more the sides battle, knowing that eventually they must come together, the longer it's going to take, and the more painful the process will be until, finally, business and education come together. The opportunity, I think, is there for them to come together and mesh well, if done properly. The danger is that protectionism will result in two stones that eventually are going to

> be crushed together by the forces of the marketplace. And of course the weaker of the two is going to pay the bigger price . . . the outcome could be worse for education . . . WILL BE, I argue, than if they decided collectively to work with the process rather than against it.

Finally, I took the opportunity to ask these articulate and successful members of industry the question which prompted this dissertation on the nature and intent of business involvement in education. ***"What is your reaction to allegations by critics who claim that business' interest in education originates from the notion that students 'are the largest untapped consumer market in our society; the public education system is the largest public enterprise still to be privatized'?" (Barlow & Robertson, 1994, p.83)*** Participant A pontificated on the Barlow and Robertson quote:

> As to the first notion, it's oversimplistic. If I was looking for an untapped market I would be in a consumer products industry, consumer consumables selling to the parents of kids, from K through to university. After all, who has more money -- students near graduation working at McDonald's, or new graduates with student loans to repay, or, to my mind, a far bigger market which consists of the parents of every single child, from K to university? That's where the "mindless money" is. [Probe as to the meaning of "mindless money".] "Mindless money" is: See, point, whine, get. To me any connection between business, education, and student market is silly and grasping at straws to fuel a dispute. And that the education system is a public enterprise to be privatized is absolutely ludicrous. Who the hell want to privatize something with such a long return on investment as public education? Privatization, to me, would lead to an American style smorgasbord of lowered quality results. National standards are needed with an eye to future consequences and results, and forget about these ridiculous trends of the month, unproven dalliances that seem to be selected by "blue-sky" committees because somebody did a study in Texas 20 years ago. I can't say that I don't feel private enterprise could do a better job of giving proper direction and instruction of usable skills, but categorically, no, I don't feel education is something which should be privatized, just optimized.

Participant C did not mince words with his response:

> Well that's pretty stupid, isn't it? I mean, in terms of the consumer market, television looks after that. In terms of privatizing it, the advantage of privatizing it would be the same advantage of privatizing anything else. If you privatized education then you could allow the best people to run it. Currently it seems to be whoever lives the longest, isn't it? But it's not a talent contest, and really life is a talent contest, like it or not. The only thing that limits you is how much you do; what you can do is how much you're willing to put in. That's the limiting factor. Whereas in education, if I hang around long enough, I know what I'm going to get. I can go to summer school and get a few more courses that will automatically give me a raise, so therefore I can figure out exactly where I'm going to be when I'm 65, and how much pension I'm going to have. But first all I have to do is keep all those other buggers from getting any more than me so that I stay on top of the heap. Oddball thinking. It's a sad thing for someone to make a quote like that . . . it tells you the whole story. I don't believe there are any rights, really. I think that this world is made up of privileges, and responsibilities go with every privilege; if you don't take the responsibility, you don't get the privilege. To me, that's the way life really is. Not everybody is created equally, and not everything has to be universal. How can everybody be equal? They aren't.

Participant D addressed the quote from a capitalistic perspective:

> I don't see them as a consumer market. I look at them as the next source of our employee base, and I don't view that as a consumer market. I want them to be the best person they can be for business when they graduate. And the idea that the public education system is the largest public enterprise yet to be privatized? I guess that's true. There are some private schools, there are some private universities, but I don't think they're much of a money-maker in terms of being a real business. I guess if somebody was in the business of being an educational organization, that's one thing; but businesses tend to be in business for what they do best. And I don't know of many businesses that want to be private educational institutions because that's not what business does best, i.e., educate. I mean there are training companies but they're very specialized. What we do best is transact business. I can't see many companies being very interested in education as a business.

To bring closure to the interview process I asked The Multinationals, ***"Are there any other concerns, issues, questions, or comments you would like to address?"*** As with The Insiders, all of The Multinationals felt our discussion had been fairly exhaustive, and I could not help but wonder if this was a polite way of saying "exhausting." Two participants concluded the interview with the following set of comments:

> I believe the primary mitigating factor behind public questioning or discontent of education is simply the aspect of value for money. As with the cost of the charlady's services versus the surgeon's, few public members can perform the services of a university professor, or to further the example, the investment advisor's commissions or fees -- if the broker makes me enough money, I really don't care what the fees are . . . lots of result is lots of result. I see others communicating, and I feel myself, that the question is simply the value of education received for the money paid. A restructuring to allow the natural weeding out of poor quality providers and a stronger emphasis on globally pertinent core skills would greatly assist in rebalancing this critical aspect of every citizen's life, development, and future.

And finally, "Well nothing really, other than it's a very interesting topic that you've chosen. I'm looking forward to seeing the results."

Theme #5B: "Now To Maude Barlow . . . "

> "It seems to me that in the long run it is impossible to maintain a democratic society unless you can spread the benefits and burdens of being an American citizen reasonably evenly."
>
> -- Felix Rohatyn

After having completed the second interview, and because his curiosity was piqued by the quote I read to him from Maude Barlow and Heather-jane Robertson's Class Warfare (1994), I asked Participant B if he would like to hear more about what Ms Barlow and Ms Robertson had written, to which he responded, "Absolutely . . . on to Maude Barlow." While the formal interview

process had been completed, I felt that NOT taking this opportunity would be negligent on my part considering that it was these two women's book which sparked my zeal for this study. I have included portions of this discussion, with his permission, as it is extremely thought-provoking. Since I had originally selected all participants based on their prominence, reputations, success, or influence, it would have been academically irresponsible of me to not consider the possible representativeness of Participant B's responses to Class Warfare (1994). The first passage I read to Participant B was: ***"North America's corporations have three fundamental goals for their preoccupation with and investment in North America's schools."*** I presented each of Barlow and Robertson's (1994) reported goals one at a time.

#1: "The first is to secure the ideological allegiance of young people to a free-market world view on issues of the environment, corporate rights and the role of government." (p.79) Participant B responded as follows: "Not bad. Well let me say that that is probably one of the ingredients that needs to be injected into the world of academia. Let me accept that I will not disagree with Ms Barlow on that point."

#2: "The second is to gain market access to the hearts and minds of young consumers to lucrative contracts in the education industry." (p.79)

> There are probably companies that have that view. Not coming from a company that really has any ability to affect the retail behavior of young people or old people, I really find it hard then to identify with that particular point. The first was easy to identify with, the second less so. I guess I can accept that there are probably companies that take that view. Let me hear more . . .

#3: "The third is to transform schools into training centres producing a workforce suited to the needs of transnational corporations." (p.79)

> I can identify with that one as well. She's actually building a great case <u>FOR</u> cooperative partnership, for business involvement . . . she's building a great case, she really is. For example, back to her second point, does Coca-Cola have impure motives? Maybe, I don't know. Do such companies that are driven by the retail behavior of people, such as Coke and Pepsi and so on, have bottom-line driven motives in capturing and influencing the buying habits of people? Sure they do. Absolutely . . . that's what advertising is all about, and that's why it is so valuable because it influences the behavior of us as individuals. And there is no question that the world of retail business is all about influencing people; convincing people to think that product A is better than product B. If that weren't so, advertising would be of no value. So Ms Barlow is stating healthy things as though they were unclean -- that's what she's doing -- she is imputing evil motives to something that isn't evil at all, I think. Going back to her notion that business is trying to introduce a view that there's an economic component to environmental issues and so on, which I think was contained in the first fundamental goal of business -- I think it is a great one . . . I'm glad she pointed that out because it needs to be addressed. There's no question that there has to be a balanced view taken of this world that we live in. Maybe the earth would be better off with NO people on it. That may be. But what's interesting is that Maude Barlow, and I know nothing of her political persuasion although I have my suspicions, and a number of other . . . let me call them special interest groups, view man as an intruder on this planet. Have you ever thought of that? Man is viewed as an intruder on the planet earth, such that we really don't belong here, and everything we do messes up some backyard that we really don't belong in. We really shouldn't be here. [Probe: Who SHOULD be here?] Well, who should be? . . . that's my point exactly. Earth was created for man. But I think the mantra, certainly of the environmentalists, and perhaps of someone like Maude Barlow, is that we're intruders here, we really don't belong, and so therefore we need to control and contain everything that we possibly can. If someone is of the view that man is and intruder on this planet then they're very seriously in error and they need to be corrected. And if academia's producing people that think that, they need to be corrected because it's wrong. But I think if you unfold the mantra of the environmentalists, that's what you find: at

> the very base of it is the thought that we don't belong here because we mess this place up. And I reckon that we have to be responsible citizens of this planet, but never forget that we belong here . . . NEVER forget that we belong here. It's an interesting thing. So then what happens? Well, protectionism takes over. Vast tracks of land where no people can even go; there's areas where it's being proposed that no one can enter, not even on a controlled basis, and that sort of thing. I remember some people in Minnesota who bought a quarter-section of land, and that was their decree: they wanted no one, not even themselves, to go into that quarter-section because they believed it should be left to who? -- creatures that aren't intruders to the planet. Crazy. But anyway, if it take business to help drill some of that thinking out, then let it be so. That's my feeling.

The second passage that I read to Participant B from Barlow and Robertson's Class Warfare (1994, p.10) began with a lead from a *Montreal Gazette* article which stated: ***"Almost half of business leaders in a national survey think schools are failing to turn out adequately trained young people."*** Barlow and Robertson furthered this lead by characterizing what business' response to it might be: ***"If blame is to be laid, it must be laid on people, and this, of course, means those vapid and indolent teachers, protected by hermetically sealed contracts-for-life, enjoying short work days and long vacations, answerable to no one. Indeed, the same article notes that only 8% of the CEOs polled said they believed that the teaching profession attracts Canada's brightest and most dedicated individuals."*** (p.10) This is how Participant B responded:

> That's too simplistic. There's a lot to be said for hermetically sealed environments, and so on, that some teachers probably exist in. But it's too simplistic to say that that's who business is blaming it on. And since this is an interview with me as one proxy voice for business in some way, I don't blame it on teachers. And having four children of my own that moved through the educational system, and ARE moving through the educational

system, I don't blame the teachers. Do I blame teachers in part? Yes, I absolutely do. Probably the greater roots of it are social breakdown -- the family being casually regarded or cast aside, kids from broken homes that really are having a tough time identifying with, what I think, children should have the ability to identify with, and that is a stable home life where they feel support and love and things like that. There's so much of the other that you can hardly say that a teacher has to fix it all when these kids arrive at school if, for the rest of their days and weekends, they're exposed to a mess, and absolute mess where there's no stability, where there's no support, where there's lots of confusion, and lots of inability for that kid to feel that their life is on any kind of a course, of any type. They might feel just totally scattered because the home is broken. It's then the accumulation of that that then comes together in the classroom, in the case of 30 kids or whatever, that makes it very difficult, I argue, for a teacher to effectively bring people along when they don't even have the basic stable home life. And a lot of this is sacrilegious these days as well, to even talk about the notion of family, and so on. But I'm a strong believer in the family. And I really feel that it's that social problem, it's a societal problem, that enters the classroom and makes it all the harder for teachers to do their jobs. The fact that they live in a sterile hermetically sealed contract and so on is another issue. I think that if you unfold it, all of those hermetically sealed contracts and tenure, and all of those other things, the result would be twofold: #1 being that a lot of the least qualified would be off doing something else -- that would still, though, leave the best qualified walking into a room of 30 kids, many of whom are from dysfunctional backgrounds. So the best and the brightest, even without the benefit or the impediment of hermetically sealed contracts, are still going to face THAT problem. I argue that at least you have the best and the brightest facing them . . . at least you have that. But that doesn't change the fact that, societally, there are a number of problems that enter the classroom. So to say that business blames the teacher is wrong; no, I don't. I think teachers, many of whom are very good, play a role -- for good or for bad -- in the development of a person from wherever they are to wherever they're going to be. If they are basketcases when they arrive, the teacher -- for good or bad -- is going to have some influence on them in those months or years. The best and the brightest, provided they're there, are going to have, I argue, the best influence to bring those along who are disadvantaged. But even the best and the brightest isn't going to be able to take someone who is really struggling with basics feelings of security and so on, and bring them to a point where

they are fully ready for life in society. Some of this is probably unfair generalization, but I think that Maude Barlow oversimplifies - business does not simply blame the teacher. I'm not on for disagreeing with Maude on this one . . . I think that it's a valid point. There's no doubt that there's some real challenges that walk in that door for the teacher to deal with. So I don't find a lot of fundamental disagreement on that; however, I also feel that she oversimplifies things by saying that business thinks it's all the teacher's fault. It's pretty tough, then, to begin to stimulate learning when they are having trouble stimulating basic functioning. One the one hand I admire teachers for having the stick-to-it-iveness to continue on in the face of what must be crushing disappointments and a feeling of not really getting anywhere. I admire them for that. That doesn't change the fact, though, that much of the structure in education needs changing. The problem with that then is that the progress of the class goes to the lowest common denominator, and the kid with behavioral problems brought about by the social situation that they're in -- this becomes the determiner of the progress of the class. And if the focus is just on getting this one kid to manage to sit still through 20 minutes, or whatever, when the others are fine with that, thankyou, that causes a general degrading of the educational system whereby students aren't where they would have been had there not been that drag on their progress. It's a callous hard thing to say, but it's true. And so if the job of the teacher becomes the job of a parent, only in a different building, we've got a problem. And that's the problem we face: teachers are surrogate parents for a period of time each day. If parents were doing their jobs -- let me just sound righteous and so on for a minute -- but if parents were doing their jobs, teachers could do theirs. The fact that parents either aren't there, or don't do their jobs, means that teachers have to. Why? Because they're the only other adults kids are in contact with in the course of a normal day. While I agree somewhat with Maude Barlow, that isn't to be confused with the notion that we still have issues around the structure of education.

I continued the discussion with a third passage from Class Warfare (1994, p.57) wherein Barlow and Robertson reported that, ***"Johnathan Weisman, who has covered education and business extensively for the Alameda newspaper group in California, holds that big business and its ideological allies haven't the courage to face up to***

their own problems. Instead, they have indulged in dangerous scapegoating." (p.57) Barlow and Robertson reinforced this line of thinking by adding, ***"Adds Alex Molnar, professor of education at the University of Wisconsin, 'Ideologically, it is important for business that public institutions be blamed for the failure of the American economy. It takes the focus off American business and industry for its failure to provide jobs for American workers.'"*** (p.57) Participant B had the following to say in response:

> WHEN was this book written? [Me: 1994]. Failure of the American economy, wow! That's a tough one because the American economy is on the greatest roll in all of history. Dallas, I was told today, has an unemployment rate of 3%, which I have always thought to be the lowest societal threshold. I didn't know it was possible to have an unemployment rate of 3%. There are more people than that that simply WON'T work, or CANNOT work, cannot function mentally or physically or whatever such that I'm stunned that Dallas, for example, is in that situation today. So I would argue, first of all, that the American economy is stale. In fact it's done quite the opposite, and the testimony to that is the fact that our Canadian dollar, as strong as it is in the rest of the world, is very weak against the US dollar . . . every currency at the moment is weak against the US dollar. Why? Because the American economy is so strong. And so I would argue first that the American economy is stale, but let's just say that it has had it's difficulties through the years, as most have. And her thesis there was that business blames academia for those problems when really business ought to look in the mirror and decide for itself what it needs to do in providing jobs? That gets us into an interesting area, and that is the purpose of government and the purpose of business. Some believe that the purpose of government is to provide jobs. Some believe that the purpose of business is to provide jobs. I argue that the purpose of neither is to provide jobs. Business doesn't exist to provide jobs. Business provides jobs because it needs to do that to get where it has to go. You will find in no company's mission statement that "Our vision is to provide jobs." And so I can see the thread of her thinking there, that her belief is that the mission SHOULD be to provide jobs. And I bet if we unpeeled it further we'd find that Maude also believes that that's the government's job -- is to CREATE jobs for people.

Business will creates jobs according to the needs of business; if people are needed to carry out the business, jobs will be provided. If people aren't needed to carry out the business, jobs won't be provided. And again, that doesn't have anything to do with the desire on the part of the businessman or woman to provide jobs. The fact is jobs will be provided if they're needed, and they won't be if they're not . . . that's the way the free market works. So to say that business should have provided more jobs is ludicrous. Business will provide jobs according to what it needs. And again I think she's being too black and white; she doesn't give any credence to the notion that business does look itself in the mirror and wonders what more it can do. But to take a simplistic view that all business does is blame education, when really they should have just created a bunch of jobs for people, is almost simple-minded to the extreme, I think. That's the danger -- she's making broad generalizations. And she probably is one who agonizes over layoffs that have taken place and now I can see what she's getting at: now she's getting at layoffs of people as her proxy for determining whether the economy is working or not, and that is flawed, that is an absolutely flawed litmus test. You cannot view the condition of the economy by the number of jobs that have been gained or lost. And to say that the loss of thousands of jobs means the economy is in trouble is wrong. The loss of those thousands of jobs was needed because of the world marketplace, again because the competitors throughout the world were dictating, not directly but indirectly, that business become more efficient. And so if General Motors needs 10,000 less people to provide cars that will be competitive with the others in the world market, then it needs 10,000 less people. What she talked about there in respect to the number of people being churned out of the system really goes to the whole notion of supply and demand, and there is not, nor should there be, any imperative for business to hire everything that academia can produce. I has to be dictated by supply and demand because that's just what the world economy runs on. And if there is an oversupply of astrophysicists and business does not need that many astrophysicists, then there should be absolutely no imperative that business hire them all because they were produced. So that's where academia . . . and we've now managed to touch on something else that will make, going back to your last formal question which was "What could make this partnership work better?" -- an acceptance on the part of academia that supply and demand also applies in the educational realm. And that demand must be examined in respect of supply. Now, one could argue that it's the students and their parents who determine what they're going to go into -- it isn't the academian

> that determines that. And if everybody want to go into astrophysics then there's nothing you can do about it. Wrong. Even with respect to the choices that mostly young people are making, is a role that business and education can play. I argue that the more people understand the world of business, the more they're going to be receptive to learning what it means that we are in a supply and demand economy. And if it appears, just to pick on astrophysicists for no particular reason other than it's one of the first in the alphabet, if a session were to be held with business and education cooperating that points people to the notion that, for whatever reason, not many astrophysicists are going to be needed, that can influence the decisions of a young person entering the world of post-secondary education. And if that sounds somehow unclean -- that they haven't been able to freely choose and so on, well that's too bad. They can still freely choose, but at least they do it with knowledge, they don't do it in ignorance. The more people are exposed to the principles of supply and demand, the better off they will be. So I think there her problem is she's not accepting that supply and demand rules; what she's saying is if you put out 10,000 astrophysicists, business should hire them all.

The fourth passage I read to Participant B from Class Warfare (1994, p.167) was, ***"Governments are restructuring education in order to ensure that those at the top of the pyramid have access to the best education possible; however, under the rubric of deficit fighting, they are diverting funds once used for the public, universal education of those near the bottom to the private sector. Thus education mirrors society's design to serve a world dominated by transnational business and its needs."*** To this Participant B stated:

> I guess there she postulates that those who are the most fortunate by virtue of their birth or birthright or whatever, are those that get the most. She also postulates that somehow this world that we live in is not fair. I agree with those things. I wish I could quit work today, live on a desert island someplace, have a yacht, ferrari and all those things without having to work for it. There are people my age who are in that position. I'm not one of them. Is that fair? Probably not. Is it a fact of life? Yes it is. And so to think that somehow we will unwind and equalize all of mankind to the point

> where everyone, regardless of their birthright, has the same life is not only impossible, it's ludicrous. The fact that King Faud of Saudi Arabia regularly flew his own personal jet to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota for treatment that other people in his fiefdom could not afford doesn't trouble me at all. And the fact that Faud managed to fly in there and get the best treatment on earth is a fact of life. It does not mean that he should have chartered 40,000 747s to bring all of the people of Saudi Arabia that have problems over to Mayo Clinic. That's just the way life is. And do I think that's necessarily the way life should be designed? Probably not. Do I accept that that's a fact of the world we live in? Yes. And if she thinks that can be reversed to the point where, regardless of birthright, everyone is going to have the same life just isn't accurate. It's just not going to happen. Now, I think what she's getting at is the notion that it is somehow wrong for those that can afford it to get better than those that can't afford it. That's the debate about Alberta Health Care and private hospitals and so on . . . a two-tiered health care system. There is this notion that somehow every drunkard in the gutter must have exactly the same access to health care as Premier Klein, for example. And I'm not saying that's not a noble goal, it just isn't practical. That's the problem. But as far as education goes, what she was saying is that basically business is focussing everything on those who are financially able to access it? [Me: That money is being taken away under the rubric of deficit-fighting and being diverted to those at the top of the pyramid.] I'm not sure how that's happened; I'm not sure that money is coming away from anyone and being given to anyone. If money is coming away, it's coming away because it isn't there. She seems to act as though it's a zero-sum game, and what you take from the poor goes to the rich. That's not so.

The fifth and last passage I read to Participant B was from a discussion paper entitled, "Traders and travellers: Public education in a corporate-dominated culture" (1995), prepared for The Canadian Teachers' Federation by Heather-jane Robertson. In it she wrote,

> ***"Let the market decide" has become the operational plan to reform services built outside the profit sector. . . While the marketplace has been an exceedingly effective mechanism to generate wealth, on the whole***

> ***its success has been achieved because of, not despite, its lack of a moral core. . . . Markets are not moral, they are necessarily preoccupied with self-interest and advantage."*** (pp.2-3)

Participant B was "amazed" at this excerpt from the discussion paper:

> The lack of a moral core, just to rephrase, has been the determinant of success to business? [Me: She says, "Markets are not moral. They are necessarily preoccupied with self-interest and advantage."] I find it amazing to have ladies like that talking about morality -- let me put it to you that way. [Me: May I quote you on that?] You sure may. I find it more than ironic that they would introduce the word "morality" to this whole discussion, having already disparaged big business and the religious right. I find that amazing, more than amazing, but we'll just leave it at amazing. Lack of morality? And lack of morality, in her definition, would be the unwillingness of business to cave in to socialism. And if business was willing to be more socialistic, it then would be moral, wouldn't it, in some way? And I argue that we are lightyears apart on that one. Absolute lightyears. And the idea that she would introduce the word "morality" is something I would like to debate with her face to face.

Two and one-half hours later I elected to bring closure to the interview process and subsequent discussion with Participant B by stating, ***"So, again I ask you, as I asked earlier, do you see business and education coming together in the future?"*** He replied,

> Yeah, I do. They're going to have to. Again, the forces of the world economy are going to dictate a lot of what happens. Survival, or even progress, is going to be determined by the willingness, and maybe in some cases, the forced acceptance by people of the notion that we're going to have to work together because there literally won't be any other way. So yes, business and education will come together . . . that's a statement of fact. Now, the challenge is working together to make it happen in the best possible way. If there are those who cannot accept that that is a fact, an elemental statement, that business and education WILL come together at some point in the future, then what's going to happen is they will come together in a way that won't make people very happy, at some point in the future. I reckon . . . my guess, is to the point where business will dominate because of the economic

> power of business. Business will dominate the educational agenda in ways that will be thoroughly unpalatable to those who are in academia. Done properly, business and academia will see one another, not so much as those on the other side of the fence, but as those that are in the same corral working together toward a common goal, with slightly different colors and positions and roles. Working together I think that's what we can arrive at. Working separately, we will come together at some point because the crush of the world economy is going to cause that to happen. But if that happens in that way, then there will be some outcomes that I think aren't going to be advantageous to a lot of people. And I think that it's the challenge today to make sure that we work together, and have mutual trust and respect for one another, and say, "In academia we understand the world of business; we understand because we maybe worked there for awhile. In business we understand the world of academia because we've been exposed to it, more than just in our post-secondary days. We understand one another, we respect one another, and we trust that we are working together for the common good and progress." If we don't have those principles in place, this thing won't come together until it's crushed together.

Summary

As mentioned at the beginning of Chapter 5, as a group The Multinationals were the most opinionated, and willing to share their opinions with me. While they made some strong and reactionary statements, the inclusion of these statements was imperative to providing insight into The Multinationals' perspectives as to the nature and intent of business involvement in cooperative education at the post-secondary level.

While The Multinationals revealed themselves to be the most right-wing and capitalistic in their ideologies, I found each of these participants to be approachable and engaging during my interviews with them. Also, this group was very passionate about the need for business involvement in education, and in their concerns about the quality of "product" being graduated by the

educational system. While a few of the opinions contained in this chapter may be unpalatable to some readers, it was my distinct impression that these individuals were sincere in their concern about the welfare and prosperity of future generations.

Despite the adamance and comprehensiveness of their answers to interview questions, The Multinationals shared similar thoughts to The Insiders regarding business' involvement in cooperative education at the post-secondary level. In thematic category number four, entitled "Square Pegs In Round Holes," The Multinationals had much to say in response to the allegations made by critics of business involvement in education; one participant was so intrigued by the Barlow and Robertson (1994, p.83) quote that he asked to hear, and respond to, more of what these two authors had written in their book Class Warfare. To attempt a summary of Theme #5B: "Now To Maude Barlow . . .", or to attempt a summary of the reaction of this participant to the contents of Class Warfare, would be a disservice to the trustworthiness of the data collected during this study. Again I would encourage the reader to revisit pages 112 to 124 and form their own conclusions about what The Multinationals had to say about their critics.

Chapter 6

"There are no new truths,
but only truths that have not been recognized by those
who have perceived them without noticing."
-- Mary McCarthy

Analysis And Presentation Of Data

Group Three: The Alberta Advantage

Introduction

As mentioned at the beginning of Chapter 4, three classifications of participants emerged from the data as they were being collected. Chapter 6 focuses on those participants whose locus of operations were within the province of Alberta. I have labelled this group "The Alberta Advantage," and it includes six participants who represent 40% of this study's findings. Once again, to ensure consistency in reporting between participant groups, I have presented the data in the same format as they were presented in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5; this allows for comparisons of data to be made more easily. However, as with The Multinationals, The Alberta Advantage will not be referred to according to their past or present operating capacities as were The Insiders. The Alberta Advantage have simply been referred to as Participants E, F, G, H, I, and J.

While The Alberta Advantage had opinions about the nature and intent of business' involvement in education at the post-secondary level, as a group these participants seemed to be somewhat circumspect and succinct in their

responses, even though the majority of their opinions concurred with those of the other two groups. It is important to note that, while these businesses' locus of operations were within the province of Alberta, they were not necessarily "small businesses," that is, four had annual gross revenues in the seven and eight digit range, and one had annual gross revenues in excess of $0.5M. I did not ask one participant about his annual gross revenues as he was a sole proprietor and it was my sense that just asking this question may have made him uncomfortable, which, in turn, may have compromised the quality of the interview process; I did not want this to happen.

As I sat at a parts order desk awaiting to begin my interview with Participant E, I was first greeted by a lifesize "SnapOn Tools Calendar Girl" posted to the wall next to me, followed by, "Can I get you a beer?" I declined his offer of a beer and we began the interview process. As with The Insiders and The Multinationals, I began by asking each of The Alberta Advantage about cooperative education and their expectations of a cooperative education program. On the topic of cooperative education, Participant F summarized the sentiments of The Alberta Advantage when he opined:

> Cooperative education is similar to apprenticeship through the sponsoring of individuals to work in a given industry. Its purpose is to provide hands-on educational experience at a graduated pace structure, that is, "the more you learn, the more you earn."

Another participant stated that cooperative education was "something like an internship program where you get 'real-life' experience in the field you've chosen to study, typically for a timeframe of one to four months." Participant J referred to cooperative education as a "low-key marriage:"

> You take courses at university or other post-secondary institutions and then get paid to work the summer for a company and do all the developmental or "gopher" jobs for on-the-job experience. And if they do a good job, when they complete university, they may

> be offered a permanent job with the company. It's a way for the company to see if this is the type of individual they want, and it's a way for the student to get a little experience and see if this is the industry he's interested in; this is a way to kind of get to know each other . . . it's like a low-key marriage.

When asked what their expectations of a cooperative education program were, Participant F answered by stating,

> A desire and willingness on the part of students to learn and understand the industry -- I would also say eagerness, honesty, initiative, integrity, and motivation on the student's part with respect to prospective and proposed business dealings. I would expect them to be hardworking, creative, and be able to read between the lines, for example, pick up on subtleties of prospective business. I would expect the educational institution to screen students for some of the attributes I just mentioned.

Participant H relayed the following expectation:

> To get people with an understanding of municipal government nuances which can't be learned in a textbook fashion at a university. This training is gotten on the job, and is best learned from a predecessor. So it's their potential ability to understand the dubiousness of municipal governance that we look for in co-op students.

Theme #1: Why Does Business Want To Be Involved In Cooperative Education Programs?

> "Acceptance is not submission;
> it is acknowledgement of the facts of a situation.
> Then deciding what you're going to do about it."
> -- Kathleen Casey Theisen

Participant J, whose background was perhaps the most varied and wide-ranging of all this study's participants, and included eight years service as a City of Edmonton Police Officer, offered insight into the differences between the Canadian and the American post-secondary educational systems:

> In the United States -- when I worked in Houston for five years -- as the construction superintendent one of my problems was that I was used to Canadian standards regarding tradespeople; that is, in Canada you study and work to become a journeyman and are very well trained. In the United States they do not have, particularly in Texas, trade schools. The way you get a "ticket" there is you go to work for, let's say the Ford plant, and in the Ford plant they have trade schools. So you're taking courses and you put in some time, and by the time five years goes by you're fully qualified within the house, the Ford plant. Let's say you quit; now you're looking for a job somewhere else as a, say, welder. The first question they ask you is, "What's your experience?", and you can say, "I'm a welder." Then they're going to ask, "Where?" and you're going to say, "the Ford plant." So now they know what kind of a welder you are. They know this welder is fully qualified to go back to what he was doing, but here, at ABC Tank Co., he's only qualified to be a "tacker" because he never learned to weld on tanks at the Ford plant. But he is considered a qualified journeyman as far as the Americans are concerned. In Canada, when you come out of tradeschool you're pretty much trained in all fields, and you get more experience by going to different fields . . . by being able to get a job in different companies . . . because here a journeyman's ticket is recognized internationally. Not so in the United States as far as the trades go. But the universities down there are pretty much the same as they are here.

As with The Insiders and The Multinationals, several preliminary questions were asked of The Alberta Advantage regarding their business-education partnerships in an attempt to understand the status of their cooperative education programs from an implementation perspective. The first questions I asked this third group of participants were, ***"As a businessperson, are you aware of cooperative education programs?"*** and ***"Have you ever been involved in a cooperative education program?"*** since the answers to these two questions served as the foundation for the study. All six of The Alberta Advantage participants were aware of cooperative education programs, and all six were or had been involved in one; however, "co-op" was an ongoing arrangement in only one-half

of the companies being represented. Participants were then asked, ***"Are you aware of other businesses in your industry sector that are involved in cooperative education programs?"***, and four reported that they were aware of others, and two did not know "for sure."

The Alberta Advantage were then asked, ***"Let us now turn our minds to thinking more generally about business involvement in education. In pragmatic terms, what does cooperation mean to you when we talk about cooperative ventures between business and education?"*** Participant I provided the following explanation:

> To me, cooperation means just that -- cooperating. Forget the "we" versus "they" mentality because as long as that mindset is there, nothing constructive can happen. For whatever their reasons, educators seem suspicious, almost resentful, about business having the resources while theirs are being cut . . . and just so you know, I don't condone the financial cuts that have been made to education and healthcare. But they don't seem to understand that any publicly administered entity is run as a non-profit organization. Many individuals of a more socialist leaning don't seem to appreciate the enormous risks assumed by business on a daily basis, that is, are sales up this month, or are they down? There are NO guarantees in business, unlike teachers who know exactly what their incomes for the year will be. If educators and others think they have some claim on the profits of business, then they must necessarily assume some of the associated risks of business. Perhaps educators should be taught more economics in university because they don't seem to realize that business generates the cash flow which makes the world go around, AND pays their salaries. Yes, that would be it -- economics as a couple of core courses while in university. In business, you're only constrained by your own drive and ambition. Now, going back to the question -- let's both, business and education, roll up our sleeves and work together for everyone's benefit, because the little bit that's going on now is not enough; we have do more, and in different ways. That's cooperation.

I asked of Participant J, ***"Do you feel business understands the concerns and needs of educators?"***, who responded:

> Yes and no. Yes and no. Education is now, because of the costs, because of the wages that teachers expect, professors expect . . . they are becoming driven by the money instead of driven why what they'd like to teach, or to be a teacher. I've never agreed with an educator's outlook, and I find them the hardest individuals to make listen. They simply don't listen; they are opinionated because "I'm an educator." In my neighborhood I'm surrounded by schoolteachers, and every once in a while, of course, we have social gatherings and they are the hardest people in the world to talk to. And firemen. They become what I didn't like to be in the police force -- cynical. The only good people are fellow cops, everybody else is an asshole; that's where most cops end up because the only thing they see is the seamier side of life, generally speaking. They're only talking to pissed-off people or bad people, they never get to talk to just normal folks. So "everybody's a jerk," you know, that's all the other people, and the only good guys are fellow cops. Well, teachers are the same way: the only people that know anything, as far as they're concerned, are fellow educators. So I think there needs to be a lot of change in that area.

In response to the next question, ***"How well do you feel educators understand business' concerns and needs as employers?"***, again all participants can be paraphrased by the succinct response of Participant I: "Not very well. I'm assuming that if they did have some basic business understanding a study like this wouldn't need to be done." Another participant shared his thoughts:

> Sometimes that's a very good question. I don't know . . . I think they care but they don't understand. No, I don't think they do understand as well as they ought to. There needs to be more coordination between what the needs of Canadian business are, and the government has to learn to listen and be able to change with the need. But that won't any time soon because they're set in their ways and "This is the way it's done."

It must be remembered that it was my observation that The Alberta Advantage were the most circumspect and succinct in their responses to interview questions.

Turning the previous question around, I asked this group of participants, ***"How well do you feel business understands the concerns and needs of educators?"***, to which their thoughts can be summarized by the comments of Participant I:

> The only thing I hear from education is anti-business comments, but I suppose it's natural to fear what you don't understand. If educators did their job, we could do ours. How concerned are they about our needs? Not at all, I would say.

When asked, ***"As a businessperson, what do you think are some of the concerns about business being involved in education, from educators' perspectives?"***, and one participant replied,

> Educators should be most concerned about students' lack of preparation for entering adulthood and the world of work. They can't teach students about industry because they have no idea what it's <u>really</u> like, and so it's the students who suffer because of this inadequacy. What do educators know about industry and surviving in the world of business? WE have to teach them real world skills.

Participant J thought that educators should be concerned about "their own very narrow view of the world;"

> Educators have very kaleidoscopic vision . . . they have a very scoped vision, and that's wrong because the student or prospective employee needs a broader vision of what's going on. So industry is demanding this, and that's why there needs to be a good working relationship between business and education -- industry knows what's needed to survive, and what isn't needed to survive. Being a specialist with a narrow view makes you a boring person to talk to because then you don't have any opinions. The one opinion that they DO have does not make it an opinion -- it makes you a communist; it's only one thought, and you can't have only one thought or opinion and be successful in a democratic system. And yet universities or post-secondary institutions are supposed to be places of higher learning. They are, but they cram so much information in one area that without the co-op type experience you wouldn't realize that there's more to it than that. And so you come out taught to the hilt, fully qualified, expecting

> and demanding things because "I've worked so hard and I've studied for so long with no money; I was deprived . . . NOW I want and I deserve special treatment." And they go out and realize they're basically an apprentice with seven years experience in school, but no experience on-the-job. So now we've got disgruntled, educated, opinionated people . . . right or wrong, and they tend to stick together.

I then asked The Alberta Advantage the same question but from a different perspective, that is, ***"As a businessperson, what do you think are some of the concerns about business being involved in education, from the government's perspective?"***, to which Participant J relayed that he felt that

> Government, like educators and other unionized groups, would probably be thinking that somehow, some way, business would be taking advantage of the individual if we allow them to become involved in what we do best. There's too much bureaucracy in government and education, and bureaucracy and free trade don't mix. And then they have bureaucracies within their own systems. It's the size that develops its own illness. As a result of what I do for a living, I get to hear an awful lot of stories about different big companies that have the same illness as our province -- it's internal bureaucracy with lots of little power struggles within it, each building their own little pyramid of power. So the government is worried that we'll get involved in their little pyramids of power -- they have to justify their existence by keeping us out.

Participant E addressed the previous three questions in his following comments:

> Business understands what it needs from the educational system, but what concerns COULD they have? Educators don't ever have to worry about waking up unemployed or out of business. Since very few of them have never really left school, I mean, they go through kindergarten to university and into the classroom as teachers -- they don't experience the outside workforce. How can they know the issues we face in business when they've never been there? They don't understand where money comes from, and they think dollars come from the government. They have little

> idea of the realities of the marketplace, so therefore how can they teach as if they do? Business has to push for this to happen. And the government is at fault because they agree to the grants, funding, and curriculum.

Moving along in the interview, The Alberta Advantage were asked, ***"Is cooperative education a good vehicle for business to express its concerns and make an impact on education?"***, to which only two of the six participants thought that it was.

> Yes, of course. I mean, it's a way of screening by the employer, but it's also a way for the employee to screen whether he's making a mistake or not. If you go through all this cost of becoming an engineer and you realize you don't WANT to be an engineer, that's an unfortunate trap because it cost you so much to get there. By having the co-op thing, both parties are learning about each other, and that's why I think it's exceptionally important. I figure the cooperative circumstance brings to light that you don't want to be in this profession, this walk of life. So go back and reassess your situation, and that's what the co-op program helps to facilitate -- for both parties.

The other participant who thought it was a good vehicle for having input into and making and impact on education proffered the following:

> For whatever reasons, it seems that co-op education is the only acceptable and palatable form of business involvement in the minds of educators. Perhaps this is because of the definite advantage to the student; I don't know. In any case, it has always been the students which concern us the most since THEY represent the pool from which we're going to be drawing our biggest future assets, which are our employees. Business' biggest complaint has always been the quality of graduated students, and the fact that we almost have to retrain them before they're ready to become full-fledged employees -- this is why we begin quite a few of our new employees at developmental levels. Business does not want to assume the role of educator or turn the educational system into a business conglomerate. No, no, no. And if educators would only listen without attributing a bunch of nastiness to our actions, then they could see that we <u>really do</u> want to help. What I think is much worse is the incessant appeal to emotionalism we hear coming from the teaching profession. They

> get themselves worked up, they get the parents worked up, all because they won't listen to or believe what it is we're trying to tell them. This is not to say that I don't believe there is a place for private educational institutions -- that should be the choice of students and parents; but private schools will never replace the public system as we know it. But, yes, there are some things within the public system which business feels could be changed for the benefit of everybody. Simple.

"Is there consensus within your business sector community regarding the expectations of post-secondary education?" The consensus among The Alberta Advantage was that there was. Participant J spoke on behalf of all participants when he stated,

> I've spoken to doctors, lawyers, welders, single moms, small business owners -- you name the walk of life -- and I would say that, generally speaking, the small businesses in particular do not like the education system. So I would say it's a general consensus, yes. I've heard it from all walks of life and all kinds of businesses or professions.

Theme #2: What Internal And External Considerations Influence Corporate Decision-Makers To Become Involved In Cooperative Education Programs?

> "Limited expectations yield only limited results."
> -- Susan Laurson Willig

Again, in an attempt to understand motive, or the desire to become increasingly involved in education, I asked The Alberta Advantage questions about the internal and external considerations influencing these corporate decisions. The first question was, ***"How important is previous work experience, or work-based learning, for the graduates you hire?"*** Only two of six of The Alberta Advantage felt that it was "extremely important." ***"What were the most significant factors influencing your decision to***

participate in cooperative education programs?" I asked participants next. Participant I articulated this:

> The most significant factors? I think, for us, it was a way to initiate relations with the university, allowing us to see students and assess their preparation to enter our industry. Initially we were hoping that this would allow us to have more input into how and what students were being taught; I say "initially" because, while we're asked how the student's doing and provide feedback on their progress, we haven't been given much of a forum to provide feedback on how and what is being taught -- which is what we'd hoped would be a benefit of being involved. Having said that, we do have the opportunity to teach the student by further preparing them via meaningful work experience during their stint with us, and we take this very seriously. It's our responsibility, by agreeing to be involved in co-op, to assist as much as we possibly can in the development of the next generation of employees.

Participant G stated that the most significant factor for her becoming involved in cooperative education was, "To return the experience to new graduates -- the same opportunity that was given to me when I was in the final stages of my studies." Three of The Alberta Advantage cited "professional responsibility" as the most significant factor influencing their decision to participate.

I then asked The Alberta Advantage, ***"What have been some of the challenges of being involved in cooperative education?"*** Participant E stated that the challenges of cooperative education involved it being "a liability because they aren't taught what we need them to know. They're taught the textbook, formal way to do things, not the practical way to do things. This is a labor intensive industry." Participant G perceived the challenges to be "the fact that it's very time-consuming and results in lost revenues. And sometimes you get big egos from little students -- but the rest is fun." Participant H felt that the biggest challenge of cooperative involvement was:

> A lot of students hired have no work experience, therefore the question is how to fit them into the organization. We have to put training into them to get output, and this is hard to do in four months. You can get them to do menial tasks, but this isn't relevant or meaningful to their area of study. And there's not enough personnel to take responsibility for a student coming in with no practical experience. We have a manpower shortage: "Working in the 90s." The biggest cost associated with being involved is the time, not the dollars, to invest in the student, i.e., having so many other competing demands. I can't pass them off to subordinates because then the work experience would be menial and not meaningful. Everybody is trying to work with fewer and fewer resources. The municipal government has become a flat organization, there's little hierarchy. I'm at a more local level where the public and council won't tolerate it. I can't let deadlines go by; I can't let my work slip, student or no student. That's the challenge.

Two of The Alberta Advantage felt that the benefits did not outweigh the costs of cooperative education, but the rest felt that any challenges that might arise "aren't worth mentioning because co-op is such a positive experience for the student."

Flipping the question around I asked, ***"How has your involvement in cooperative education programs been of value to your organization?"***, and, like the previous two groups of participants, most of The Alberta Advantage felt that it provided them with "an opportunity to see what students are being taught." Participant G told me that it makes her "feel good" because "it keeps me on my toes. It also provides me with connections should I need future associates to work for me. It makes you feel good to help and teach someone a trick of the trade -- this feeds my ego." Participant E vehemently stated that, in his mind,

> There are no advantages. Industry has to put up with and find them something to do. There are also major time constraints in our industry. We take students because I know two instructors --

> that's the only reason we take them, AND they're handpicked so as not to be a hindrance. We have not hired one kid as an apprentice, because they're not being trained properly.

Theme #3: Does Business Identify Its Goals As Being Short-Term Or Long-Term With Respect To Its Involvement In Cooperative Education?

> "Every worthwhile accomplishment, big or little,
> has its stages of drudgery and triumph;
> a beginning, a struggle, and a victory."
> -- Anonymous

As with The Insiders and The Multinationals, here I was looking for future considerations that The Alberta Advantage or their employing organizations might have had regarding their involvements in cooperative education programs. Since, once again, the basic premises of their involvements in education were that participants thought business *should* be involved, I asked them directly, ***Should business be involved in education?"*** and ***"What do you see as the 'business' between business and education?"*** As expected, all of The Alberta Advantage thought business "definitely needed to be involved in education." Participant H explained why: "We should be bigger lobbyists with respect to business involvement in education. We want students to have the meat and potatoes, not the gloss." Participant J offered the following explanation:

> Should business be involved? Yes, because they know what they want. Bureaucrats don't know what business needs, and NOBODY EVER ASKS. The government shouldn't totally take it upon itself without having companies involved . . . ABC plant over here should be able to have some say in what their tradesmen are going to be like. I should be able to send my tradesmen to school and have then learn something a little more related to what they need. But that would be hard to do, of course, because how the hell do you facilitate all the industries' different needs? But they

> should have some input. I think instead of using the NAIT facility, use their own facility and bring in a NAIT instructor. It would solve a lot of problems that way. In other words, you get a quality person, that is, he's a teacher by trade, and has been taught according to those standards, therefore you wouldn't get any substandard teachers teaching . . . but then you would not need the government facility to the extent that we do, because now we're taking the teacher from the educational institution into the company for a specified period of time. This is what I think: if you move the teacher from the school room to a classroom in industry, then the teacher would be learning as well as the people he's teaching, because the teacher would see what business has to go through to survive given that he's inside those walls, NOT the education walls. Teachers lose perspective because they're not exposed to the rest of the world. You get scoped vision again.

Participant I relayed that the "business" between business and education should be:

> Working together would be in everyone's best interests -- business, education, students, teachers, government, the economy, etc. We need to work together in order to keep this great country of ours competitive. This is done by ensuring that our workforce is properly educated and adequately trained, AND that it is current in its practices. We need to be prepared to learn continuously. And business can't do this on its own, as much as we'd like to think we could. I look at it this way: education could really benefit by allowing us in their arena, and we, of course, could benefit by having them in ours. Being that our economy is a global one, our primary concern should focus on doing what needs to be done to keep Canada strong, instead of the professions pitting themselves against one another in needless little rivalries. Canada is the best country in the world, and Alberta is the best province in Canada. So if the professions would just get over themselves and look to the common good, we'd have an even better nation than we do now.

To the question, ***"How might cooperation between business and education be strengthened?"***, Participant I was the only individual who had given it some thought.

> Like I said, by eliminating any rivalries between the professions, and working together to strengthen Canada's position in the global marketplace, as opposed to any given profession's position within Canada. It's a question of long-term thinking versus short-term thinking, where we have to consider and decide what's best for all of Canada's citizens, not just business or education or doctors or public servants. What some folks don't realize is that if one segment of the population is suffering for any length of time, directly or indirectly we all suffer from their suffering. An individual, or a group of individuals, cannot prosper in isolation because everything that happens has an effect on other things. NO man is an island.

In the previous response, Participant I also addressed the next interview question which was, ***"What do you perceive to be some of the advantages of business being involved in education, from a short-term perspective as well as a long-term perspective?"***

As the concluding question in this thematic area I asked The Alberta Advantage, ***"How do you see business and education coming together in the future?"*** Surprisingly, five of the six individuals in this group reported that they did not see this happening "in the near future." Here is what Participant J had to say:

> At the moment, I don't, no. I don't see how either of them is trying. I mean, NAIT and the university are both struggling due to government cuts, so they're encouraging more foreign content because those people have the money to come from their countries, sponsored by their own governments, or sponsored by some industry to get a university education, and then go back to their own country. And from what I understand, tuition for foreign students is twice what it is for our students, so guess who the university wants more of? -- those people. So your domestic student has a bitch of a time getting in -- he's being screened out because the university's simply become commercialized. Shouldn't be that way. You should, as an individual in Canada with full Canadian citizenship, have the priority, but that's not the way it is. So people of the rest of the world are coming to our nation for education and leaving, taking that same education to use it against us, if you will. OK? And so that's why I said it's more

> important because our country is becoming backward as far as its citizens are concerned, BECAUSE our institutions are catering to the other nations. Is that right? No, I don't think so. So we're not making an effort; we're going in the reverse at the moment. For example, if I come from Egypt and I have the money because the Egyptians pay their people to go to university, give them the tuition . . . so I come to Canada because it has the best schools to go to -- U of A; and here I am, just a kid out of highschool struggling because my parents don't have much money. Who's going to get accepted into university? The foreign student or me? The foreign student for sure. He's got the money and the university knows he's got the money. It's uncertain that I'm going to have enough money to get all the way through. This one [the Egyptian] they know they've got the money already -- they're going to take the "for real" money.

The consensus appeared to be that business and education would only come together "with a lot of hard work."

Theme #4: Square Pegs In Round Holes

> "There is no such thing as conversation. It is an illusion.
> There are interesting monologues, that is all."
> -- Rebecca West

As with The Insiders and The Multinationals, I asked The Alberta Advantage three questions which did not fit thematically into any of the first three groups. The first of these more provocative questions was, ***"In your opinion, are special interest groups a factor in relations between the business and education sectors?"*** Participant J explained the advantages that special interest groups may provide:

> I think the special interest groups could be helpful because they bring to the table, or bring an awareness to, things that might not otherwise be considered. But let me say I'm a very strong non-union person -- I detest unions. I don't mind associations because an association is a group of people working directly with an employer. Unions I don't agree with because they have a tendency to make lazy people. But to answer your question, do I think special interest groups help? Yeah, everything that stirs in

> the pot helps. I think that there's a place for special interest groups; I think it's a costly thing because they get their fingers into some pots they have no business getting their fingers into, but I mean they do some good in other areas. So, I mean, it's kind of like looking after the dog -- you have to use flea powder, you have to use shampoo, you have to use a lot of things to keep the dog healthy. So, yes, I think there's a place for special interest groups.

Participant E felt that "unions don't care about the trades or education -- they exist to help the employee, not industry. . . . they make their money collecting union dues from employees;" he also felt that unions exist to "serve only organized labor, and not for the betterment of industry. They don't care if industry survives or thrives -- if industry isn't profitable, the union will just go find another industry." Again, the rest of The Alberta Advantage relayed that they "hadn't really thought about it" when I asked them this question about special interest groups.

The next question, ***"Do you think educational reform is important or needed?"***, to which all six of The Alberta Advantage replied that it was. Participant J shared his thoughts with me:

> Yeah, I think it's needed. Obviously it's needed because Canadians are not . . . have been known around the world to be smart, but if we continue to cut our costs . . . there's two things in our country that I don't think should be messed with, and that's health benefits and education. Those two things need to be kept up or otherwise we will be a third world country, as far as education is concerned, in a very short period of time. The amount of money we're about to spend on education is only 1/20th of what Sweden spends. That gives you an example. Yes they have a more socialistic outlook than we do, but that's not the point: The point is we have to compete in the world market. And if we don't spend the time and effort between companies and education systems, then we're going to become a backwards nation. So it's important that we learn how to fix this, yes . . . in a hurry.

Participant I abruptly responded, "Isn't that what I've been talking about for the last hour and a half? A redundant question, I think."

Finally, I asked The Alberta Advantage the question which sparked this dissertation on the nature and intent of business involvement in education: ***"What is your reaction to allegations by critics who claim that business' interest in education originates from the notion that students 'are the largest untapped consumer market in our society; the public education system is that largest public enterprise still to be privatized'?" (Barlow & Robertson, 1994, p.83).*** Participant H felt that

> It may be untapped, but it's also untrained. Education isn't doing/ providing the type of training we require for our business. We still have to put time, effort, and resources into training these individuals; we hire them but we STILL have to train them. They could be considered raw material, i.e., they're skilled but new, because the necessary training isn't being provided. Public education provides the basics, but from my perspective, the education isn't there, especially in public/municipal/accounting/ finance/governance areas.

Participant I, who, by this time seemed somewhat impatient and eager to bring the interview process to its conclusion, replied, "That's so simplistic and simple-minded it doesn't warrant commenting on." Participant J expressed his reaction to the Barlow and Robertson (1994) quote:

> That's a loaded question, isn't it? Well of course we've been talking about this all along, and some of it I agree with, and some I don't. I think, yes, the educated person or student is an untapped market, absolutely -- that's the nature of what he is. But as to the other, I'm not sure. I think that . . . I think if we don't soon adopt more of looking after our own first, in some way, and how do I know everything? -- it's just my opinion on a small area -- but if we don't soon adapt to the changing nation education system, we are going to be a regressive country as opposed to a progressive country. We're reacting as opposed to proacting, and because we're a nation of service as opposed to a nation of manufacture,

> it starts with way more than just education. Canada hardly builds anything; it fixes what everybody else has made instead of making it. You pick up anything, where's it made? It's made somewhere else. So what have we got a lot of? People that fix somebody else's imported products. So we don't have a lot of clout in the rest of the world because we don't make very many things. We can't export much; we have to export our expertise. If we use the education system to learn to repair the things that we're buying from other countries, and we can't even fix what we buy, then the tradesmen are going to come from somewhere else; the technicians are going to come from somewhere else. Now we're just going to be a bunch of existing individuals doing manual work.

To bring closure to the interview process I asked each of The Alberta Advantage, ***"Are there any other concerns, issues, questions, or comments you would like to address?"*** Their responses included, "No, I think we've covered most of the bases; you've brought me through this discussion quite well;" "One last thing I'd like to say 'for the record' is I think whole language has been one of the worst failings our system has had. The lack of phonics and 3Rs are the major culprits of poor education." Lastly, Participant I, who I perceived to be anxious to finish the interviews with me, paid the following complement: "I think you're brave to have chosen this topic -- I hope you're prepared for all kinds of reactions. Anyway, thankyou for letting me be a part of it. I'd be interested in your findings."

Summary

As mentioned at the outset of this chapter, The Alberta Advantage were the most circumspect and succinct in their answers during my interviews with them regarding their perceptions as to the nature and intent of business involvement in cooperative education at the post-secondary level.

Despite their somewhat staccato responses to my interview questions,

The Alberta Advantage shared the opinions and concerns of both The Insiders and The Multinationals. Since this was the last group of participants I analyzed and presented, it is fair to say that I had reached a point of data saturation as there were no significant deviations from the previous two groups in the responses of The Alberta Advantage to any of the interview questions.

The one participant in this group whose background was perhaps the most eclectic of all the study's participants, and included eight years service as a City of Edmonton Police Officer, offered an interesting and revealing analogy with respect to how well business and education understood one another; if one sees another only as an adversary, should there be an surprise at the resulting animosity? This participant's comments are worth reiterating as they summarized a very basic human motivator unique to no profession, and that is Abraham Maslow's (1962) basic need of security. Participant J stated,

> Education is now, because of the costs, because of the wages that teachers expect, professors expect . . . they are becoming driven by the money instead of driven why what they'd like to teach, or to be a teacher. I've never agreed with an educator's outlook, and I find them the hardest individuals to make listen. They simply don't listen; they are opinionated because "I'm an educator." In my neighborhood I'm surrounded by schoolteachers, and every once in a while, of course, we have social gatherings and they are the hardest people in the world to talk to. And firemen. They become what I didn't like to be in the police force -- cynical. The only good people are fellow cops, everybody else is an asshole; that's where most cops end up because the only thing they see is the seamier side of life, generally speaking. They're only talking to pissed-off people or bad people, they never get to talk to just normal folks. So "everybody's a jerk," you know, that's all the other people, and the only good guys are fellow cops. Well, teachers are the same way: the only people that know anything, as far as they're concerned, are fellow educators. So I think there needs to be a lot of change in that area.

Chapter 7

"Acceptance is not submission;
it is acknowledgement of the facts of a situtation.
Then deciding what you're going to do about it."
-- Kathleen Casey Theisen

Summary, Conclusions, Implications, And Reflections

This chapter presents an overview of the study, a summary of the research design and method, and draws conclusions about key findings as they relate to the research questions. Concluding sections focus on implications for research, theory, and practice, with my personal reflections on the completion of this study contained at the very end of the chapter.

Overview Of The Study

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the perspectives and perceptions of business as to the nature and intent of its involvement in cooperative education programs; the objective was to develop an understanding of motives for their involvements.

The general research question which guided this investigation was: What does business perceive to be the nature and intent of its involvement in cooperative education at the post-secondary level? This study was also guided by the following specific research questions, each of which attempted to address the concept of motivation:

1. Why does business want to be involved in cooperative education programs?

2. What internal and external considerations influence corporate decisionmakers to become involved in cooperative education programs?
3. Does business identify its goals as being short-term or long-term with respect to its involvement in cooperative education?

Significance of this study. At its most fundamental level this study addressed the need for a better understanding of the role business wants to play within the educational arena. The relationship between the basic institutions of education and work need to be woven into a new pattern. Where there has been isolation, there must now be direct communication; where there has been suspicion and distance, there must now be trust and cooperation. This study was significant because:

1. There has been much speculation and attribution of motive with respect to business involvement in public education; however, virtually no research has focused on motive; even though it has considerable influence on the operations of educational institutions.

2. It may promote a sensitivity to the concerns of education and business regarding their involvements with one another.

3. It may stimulate mutual interest, trust, and respect between current and potential partners in education thereby promoting a growth in quality business-education alliances.

4. It may help reduce skepticism and tension between business and education by providing insight and understanding into the reasons why business wants to become more involved in the educational process.

This study is significant because "there are a number of inhibitors to [industry and education] working together, but chief among them is mutual suspicion and distrust." (Wilson, 1984, p.31)

Research Design And Method

This study was conducted using a qualitative framework, with emphasis placed on the analysis of data gathered through personal interviews. This exploratory and descriptive study employed methods consistent with a naturalistic mode of inquiry, which is characterized as evolving, emerging, and flexible. The methods employed were consistent with what Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to as an interpretivist approach to research, that is, questions about how different value positions can be brought together, and what makes communication and understanding between them possible.

The development of the standardized and semi-structured interview guides was assisted by an extensive review of the related literature, consultations with my advisory committee and other faculty members, and a pilot-testing of the interviews' content and format.

Participants purposefully selected for inclusion in this study consisted of 15 senior executives from 13 industry sectors whose employing organizations ranged in size from sole proprietor to multinational corporation; geographically the companies conducted business at local, provincial, national, and international levels. Study participants included four women and 11 men, of which five either were or have been involved in the educational system in a teaching capacity for a minimum of 10 years. It is worth mentioning that the majority of the 15 participants in this study guest-lectured at post-secondary institutions on a regular basis.

Summary Of Key Findings: Themes And Other Thoughts

After much thought, it was decided that the best way to summarize this study's findings would be to use the collected data to respond to the headings of Chapter 2: Review Of Related Literature. While some of Chapter 2 is strictly informational in nature (that is, its inclusion is to provide a background to, or history of, this study), some sections warrant a direct response utilizing data collected from the 15 participants in this study. I will use their thoughts and opinions, in their words, to address the issues raised in Chapter 2, the literature review. I have chosen to summarize the data according to the following headings in Chapter 2: (1) Why partner?; (2) Why now?; (3) What does business want from education?; (4) Barriers to business-education partnerships; and (5) And so . . . ?

Why partner? In this section a quotation by Collins and Doorley (1991, p.11) stated that partnerships are "rooted in cold necessity. No company makes a strategic alliance with another unless it has to -- that is, unless it can achieve its strategic objectives more effectively, at lower cost or with less risk, than if it acted alone." It is these authors' reference to no company becoming involved in a strategic alliance with another "unless it has to" that all of this study's participants broached in a variety of ways; they all felt that education could benefit from the implementation of certain business strategies; in particular they all felt that, with the involvement of business, education could become more (a) relevant and meaningful to the student by preparing them for the world of work, and (b) effective and efficient in its use of resources. While there were varying degrees of optimism voiced regarding business and education working together as partners in a true partnership arrangement, all participants articulated that they felt that, "good, bad, or ugly," business will become increasingly involved in

education if for no other reason than "by default." This theme was addressed in my conversations with all participants, but one participant summarized all of their sentiments when he relayed that the trend of government is that of being less and less able to provide for the funding needs of education. He addressed the idea that, like it or not, just because funds have been allocated by government, in reality those same funds have been collected from corporate taxpayers. The fact that those funds have been procured by government, and not generated by it, somehow makes them "less polluted" with the notion that business is motivated by its own greed. This participant reiterated that government is merely an acceptor and redistributor of money . . . it does not generate revenues of its own to ensure its survival; that is, government is not "in the business" of creating wealth. Participants also believed that the marketplace will transcend what the government wants or does not want to do, and that will include the increasing involvement of business in education; one of the ways this can best be accomplished is clearly through the cooperative framework. The more that business and education battle the inevitability of working together, the more painful it will become as they are forced to work together by the forces of the marketplace, with the weaker of the two paying the greater price; participants clearly saw education as being the weaker of the two institutions.

"Sometimes it's worse to win a fight than to lose."
-- Billie Holiday

While participants felt that the idea of partnering with education was a good one, and cooperative education was a great way to initiate relations, they also felt partnership should be entered into voluntarily and with full disclosure of its advantages and disadvantages to each party. The idea that business-

education alliances may become "rooted in cold necessity" was not the way my participants preferred that they be initiated.

While participants felt education stood to gain much by liaising with business, two of them felt that business stood to gain "tremendously" by liaising with education, that is, through education's expertise and strength in research and development. By capitalizing on its strength in research and development, and liaising with business on projects, education would necessarily become more familiar with, and aware of, what business requires from it. However, to do this effectively would require a restructuring of education so that it is able to capitalize on the expertise its instructors could provide to business.

Why now? The majority of this study's participants felt that the increase in cooperative ventures between business and education was due to the "imperatives" of our global economy. They agreed with Collins and Doorley (1991) who stated that growing internationalism, increasingly complex technology, and rapid technological changes are responsible for the developing role of strategic business-education partnerships.

> There is no longer enough time to rely on one's own resources to produce new products. No company has a monopoly on good ideas and, to remain successful, multinationals must be prepared to use strategic partnerships to acquire the best [people], technology and products from outside (p.6).

What does business want from education? According to the literature, business wants education to provide the following: (a) discipline in the formative years; (b) more emphasis on the basic skills of reading, writing, and computation; (c) the ability to adapt to rapid change in our increasingly complicated and technical society; (d) the inclusion of parents, industry, and labor groups in educational policy formation; (e) effective programs for students

who do not complete post-secondary education; (f) learning opportunities outside of formal educational structures so that students will be less isolated from the "real" world; (g) fair and realistic measurements of school outputs in human rather than statistical terms; and (h) accountability for student results (Chaffee, 1980). The 15 individuals I interviewed all directly or indirectly confirmed that, yes, these would be the "expectations" that business has of educators. It is fair to say there are no major incongruities between what my review of the literature stated business wants from education and what senior executives themselves said they expected. In addition, two participants repeatedly made reference to educators' expertise in the areas of research and development which could be capitalized on to the benefit of both education and business.

Barriers to business-education partnerships.

> "The ego is a self-justifying historian which seeks only that information that agrees with it, rewrites history when it needs to, and does not even see the evidence that threatens it."
> -- Anthony G. Greenwald

Position differences. Perhaps the biggest difference in their perspectives has to do with shorter-term versus longer-term thinking, which is, pragmatically speaking, a fundamental one; it also indirectly permeates into other areas of contention. While the literature reports that educators criticize business for being short-sighted in matters of education, the participants of this study acknowledged that there was "some truth" to this criticism. "I think industry is frustrated by educators because they often find them relatively unwilling to move significant distances very quickly," stated one participant; another reinforced the unpredictable and resultant "quick decisions" that are required in the transaction of business on a daily basis. Educators are not involved in

operations wherein their daily activities have to be rescheduled and refocused due to a single isolated event. Educators necessarily attempt to provide students with stability and regularity in the daily activities of learning. The question therefore becomes: Can this very fundamental difference between business and education be overcome? One participant thought the short-term and "reactionary" thinking characteristic of business presented an opportunity which private educational facilities could capitalize on. He saw a need for private institutions to provide what he referred to as "market shift" skills, that is, the high risk, quick decisions that are required by business to operate in a necessarily reactionary fashion. These institutions would teach "market shift" skills that would include knowing when to "move quickly without sacrificing flexibility," and being able to change according to market shifts in the economy. This same individual stated that business wants to solve the problems of today, while educators are more concerned about the longer term, or the future, and discontinuities arise as a result of these differing vantage points.

It also becomes increasingly difficult to enter into a true partnership if one party is perceived as being more powerful, resourceful, and successful than the other. These conditions lead to a more potent form of resentment and mistrust of the idea because the less powerful of the two parties is more likely to view the partnership as a sign of weakness on its part, that is, it is not able to accomplish its mandate without help and needs the assistance of an outside party. This arrangement may result in misgivings which set the tone for the partnership.

Differences in management and political philosophy. Since management style is a derivative of one's political philosophy, it is not surprising that entrepreneurs and educators would subscribe to difference political persuasions. Worth noting again are the definitions of capitalism,

liberalism, and socialism as defined by Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary in Chapter 1 of this dissertation:

Capitalism (def.): An economic system characterized by private or corporate ownership of capital goods, by investments that are determined by private decision rather than by state control, and by prices, production, and the distribution of goods that are determined mainly by competition in a free market.

Liberalism (def.): A political philosophy based on belief in progress, the essential goodness of man, and the autonomy of the individual and standing for the protection of political and civil liberties; a theory in economics emphasizing individual freedom from restraint and usually based on free competition, the self-regulating market, and the gold standard.

Socialism (def.): Any of various economic and political theories advocating collective or governmental ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods.

From a purely denotational definition, capitalism and liberalism do not stand as diametrically opposed as the connotations attached to them would imply; however, common vernacular has reduced these two philosophies to bipolar positions when, by definition, socialism is the opposite of capitalism. That aside, individuals in business tend to be labelled as "capitalist" in their thinking, and, generally speaking, educators tend to be thought of as "liberalist" in their thinking. Regardless of the semantics involved, industrialists and educators tend not to share political ideologies. An example of this would be that industrialists believe that deficiencies in public education are the result of poor management practices and not a lack of funding; they do not agree with educators that more money necessarily translates into better education. Likewise, educators perceive business to be cold and uncaring when they

attempt to enlighten industry about the financial and social difficulties currently faced by public education. Perhaps the most illustrative of this perception is the belief of one study participant who assuredly stated, and other participants implied,

> Some believe that the purpose of government is to provide jobs. Some believe that the purpose of business is to provide jobs. I argue that the purpose of neither is to provide jobs. Business doesn't exist to provide jobs. Business provides jobs because it needs to do that to get where it has to go. You will find in no company's mission statement that "Our vision is to provide jobs."

While this study's participants were aware of education's need for increased resources and funding, they believed that educational institutions are not only undersupported, but underproductive as well. As a result, participants expressed that their support for education would "necessarily be contingent" on mutually agreed upon terms and conditions.

As expected, business and education differed in their philosophies on the role of government: Study participants saw the role and ability of government to continue supporting existing societal infrastructures as eroding due to the imperatives of a global economy and marketplace. All participants subscribed to a laissez-faire approach to the economy, and not to the kinds of protectionism they perceived as being proposed by educators. It is, therefore, reasonable to state that the data collected for this study confirmed that differences in management and political philosophies pose a barrier to effective and beneficial business-education partnerships.

Organization differences. Corporations operate in a competitive environment under intense pressure to get new and improved products into the marketplace. Rapid technological change, frequent modifications to company organization, unpredictable workforce requirements, and constant market

fluctuations necessitate short-term planning cycles. This is in sharp contrast to the stability of educational institutions which tend to operate and forecast based on long-term (five years or more) planning cycles. The majority of participants expressed frustration with the speed at which educational institutions operate, therefore it is to be expected that their differing temporal perspectives hinder the development of ties between business and education, and it is not surprising that each becomes frustrated with the pace at which the other would prefer they operate. Being that business and education view the world from different time vantages, it is to be expected that the two institutions would necessarily organize themselves to be reflective of and operational within their planning cycles; to do otherwise would be inconsistent with the basic premises to which they adhere.

And so . . . ? Despite position differences, management and philosophical differences, and organizational differences which appeared to be the primary barriers to true partnerships between business and education in both the literature review and the data collected for this study, the 15 CEOs and Presidents I interviewed still felt that mutually beneficial arrangements could be arrived at if both sides were willing to work together in a cooperative fashion. This would entail building on the strengths, or capitalizing on those resources, that each partner "brings to the table," and remembering that the goal is a shared one, mutually beneficial to both business and education, as well as all those affected by these two institutions working together.

To attribute purely philanthropic reasons for business' desire to become more involved with education would, of course, be naive; however, to attribute purely self-serving motives for this same involvement would be inaccurate. While the participants in this study levelled many criticisms against the

educational system, each of these criticisms can be found to be rooted in one of the three previously mentioned barriers to business-education partnerships. With cooperation, determination, willingness, and a focus on the mutual goal, not one study participant expressed a belief that any of these barriers were insurmountable; the majority of participants felt that good, solid relations established through cooperative education programs provided a "springboard" for longer-lasting, more complex joint ventures. Again I present what the former University Dean had to say at the outset of my data collection, as he was the first President to be interviewed for this study on the nature and intent of business involvement in cooperative education at the post-secondary level:

> We need a number of educational representatives to talk to a number of business representatives, all willing to work on a non-confrontational project to try and get a marriage between industry and education. They need to TALK and try to find common ground. In order to understand your opponent, is it not best to walk a mile in his moccasins?

Of their critics, the majority of participants felt it was easy to impute suspicious motives to those things one does not fully understand. While this angered some participants, the majority expressed frustration and regret over the proliferation of anti-business sentiment they perceived to be emanating from the educational community; they felt they were getting an undeserved "bad rap" from educators. "The inherent mistrust between business and education," as written or implied in the literature, is an inaccurate and misleading statement; study participants reported that they, as a proxy voice for business, did not so much mistrust educators as they got impatient with them. It was my distinct impression that educators were more than welcome to provide business with input into areas of educational expertise, and to participate in "business practicums" in the work world of industry; business, however, did not feel

welcome to do the same. As one of The Insiders told me, "They [educators] want to give advice without taking any."

Being part of the public infrastructure, education necessarily depends upon government for its funding; and since government is not in the business of "wealth creation," it necessarily depends upon corporate and individual taxpayers to provide the revenues it needs to support its infrastructure of public services. Ergo education depends, indirectly, upon revenues generated by business. Directly or indirectly, does it really matter where the funding for education comes from so long as there is enough of it to provide quality education to all citizens? Aside from relatively recent fund-raising efforts, public education generates little revenue of its own and therefore will always be dependent upon other sources for its financial resources; educators realize this and, understandably, resent the vulnerable position it puts them in. The welfare of our public educational system is indeterminantly dependent upon the taxpayer, and therefore subject to public scrutiny and accountability with respect to the way it spends those taxpayers' dollars. Corporations, on the other hand, are largely self-reliant, generating the revenues required to remain viable, on-going concerns. Business is vulnerable primarily to the vagaries of the marketplace, and must navigate its operations around and through such uncertainties if it is to survive. Business is made vulnerable by the very philosophies it subscribes to, just as education is made vulnerable by the very philosophies it subscribes to -- the irony in this is that each has no one to blame for its choice of philosophy.

Conclusions

"In nature there are neither rewards or punishments --
there are consequences."
-- Robert G. Ingersoll

This study explored the perceptions of business as to the nature and intent of its involvement in cooperative education programs at the post-secondary level.

The study was guided by the following specific research questions, all of which attempted to address the concept of motivation:

1. Why does business want to be involved in cooperative education programs?
2. What internal and external considerations influence corporate decisionmakers to become involved in cooperative education programs?
3. Does business identify its goals as being short-term or long-term with respect to its involvement in cooperative education?

This section summarizes and provides conclusions as suggested by the findings of this study.

Regarding the general research question: What does business perceive to be the nature and intent of its involvement in cooperative education at the post-secondary level? The findings of this study suggested that, with regard to the nature of its involvement, business wants to simply become more involved, in as many ways as education will allow. This study's participants did not feel that they were really "involved" at all, aside from their provision of a "place to put a co-op student" for a specified period of time. While all participants took this responsibility seriously, they felt "cheated" because, while they were "good enough" to provide placement

experience for students, they were seen to be "some sort of ogre or bogeyman" when it came to expressing their thoughts and concerns about the "product" education was turning out.

Regarding its intent: The primary reason for business wanting to be more involved in education, as cited by study participants, was to ensure that those who will be involved in business in the future, and will lead business into the future, are prepared to do just that; that is, they are prepared for the responsibilities of that involvement. True two-way functionality with respect to its involvement was the overriding reason for business wanting to become involved in education; industry leaders want to make sure, for the sake of business and future leaders in industry, that students are adequately prepared for the tasks that will face them.

Regarding specific research question #1: Why does business want to be involved in cooperative education programs? The majority of business leaders included for study felt that the cooperative education experience was an excellent way for business to "get its foot in the door" with respect to its involvement in education. By providing positive cooperative experiences, business felt that any skepticism about its sincerity and concern regarding the "preparedness" of future generations would be diminished through the time and effort it devoted to cooperative programs. In a few instances, cooperative education was perceived to be "the only acceptable way" business was allowed to be a part of students' academic development.

Regarding specific research question #2: What internal and external considerations influence corporate decision-makers to become involved in cooperative education programs? Time and timing were the major internal and external considerations, respectively, cited

by this study's participants. Due to the pace at which industry must necessarily transact business, it is not surprising that the element of time would be of paramount consideration; not one participant made reference to the financial resources required to support cooperative education program involvement. Clearly, finding the time to make the experience a meaningful and valuable one for the student was business' most costly contribution to cooperative education.

Regarding specific research question #3: Does business identify its goals as being short-term or long-term with respect to its involvement in cooperative education? Again, industry necessarily conducts itself from a shorter-term perspective than does education, that is, "We want to solve today's problems;" however, the fact that the "preparedness" of those who will be leading business into the future was what most concerned this study's participants indicated that business perceives its involvement as having long-term ramifications. So in answer to this research question, business identifies its functional/operational activities as being short-term, but perceives its social responsibilities as being long-term in nature; business leaders want to ensure the future of their organizations' viability and functionality in the marketplace. Cooperative education programs provide industry with the opportunity to teach and influence future business leaders.

Implications For Practice, Theory, And Research

"The strength of the drive determines
the force required to suppress it."
-- Mary Jane Sherfey

Several implications for practice, theory, and research have been identified in the findings of this study.

Implications for practice. With the findings of this study in mind, several recommendations are provided for: (a) business; (b) education; (c) government; and (d) students. Since the majority of the participants in the study expressed frustration as a result of differing political philosophies, their advice and suggestions have been incorporated into the following recommendations.

Recommendations for business. Industry leaders should continue to support and become involved in post-secondary cooperative education programs. Industry leaders should increase their level of participation and resources allocated to cooperative education endeavors in an effort to strengthen such programs and their relations with the educational community; this would ease the burden on post-secondary institutions caused by a reduction in currently available resources. This increased allocation to cooperative endeavors may be perceived as a measure of "good faith," and result in reduced skepticism and resentment of business by the educational community.

Industry leaders need to be aware of the time commitment required to develop good relations of this nature. This is important because the outcomes of cooperative education programs are educational benefits, valuable learning opportunities for students and other intangible benefits that will not be reflected in business' "bottom line," (Grant, 1998) but may be categorized as "good will" on their balance sheets.

It is recommended that any business which is considering becoming involved in cooperative education should determine its area of expertise, and then determine whether an interest in sharing that expertise exists (Grant, 1998).

Also, keeping the lines of communication open between the educational institution and the business is very important; listen to and consider the concerns of educators without letting any preconceived notions interfere.

I would also suggest to industry leaders that they practice patience with their partnering educational institution and its members, and remember that business is an environment in which relatively few succeed; sharing some secrets of their success can be done without fear of losing any competitive advantage. This sharing of knowledge and expertise may result in a better understanding of business by its detractors.

Finally, I would like to say to those businesses who have elected to participate in cooperative programs with post-secondary institutions: keep up the hard work and do not be discouraged -- future generations of knowledgeable and productive employees are at stake.

Recommendations for educators. Educational leaders should continue to develop and promote post-secondary cooperative programs to businesses and students because the benefits of such programs are primarily educational in nature by being valuable learning opportunities for students. The cooperative experience also provides students with a competitive "edge" with respect to academic learning and prospective employers.

I would suggest that educational leaders listen to the concerns of business and take them into consideration; allow business to have a more active role in the development of such educational programs as "co-op." These actions may be perceived as a measure of "good faith," and result in reduced resistance and increased generosity on the part of business.

To educational leaders I respectfully submit that money alone is not always the solution to a problem; working collaboratively with business, and

pooling resources and expertise in the problem area, may be a longer-term solution.

Finally, I would suggest to educators that they give consideration to the advantages of becoming involved in a "business practicum," wherein time is spent in a business environment with the intent of becoming more familiar and comfortable with the operations of business; the interest shown in how business is conducted may lower some operational barriers.

Recommendations for government. Leaders in government should conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the reduced funding to post-secondary education. Instead of decreasing funds designated for instruction, classrooms, and research and development, government should consider downsizing the body that governs education. The largess, complexity, and size of government, and its appetite for money, has created a wasteful environment which corporate and individual taxpayers are tired of supporting. Allocate the money saved through the downsizing of bureaucracy and administration of government to the operating requirements of essential public services such as education, thereby focusing more on the provision of a quality educational experience to all students. Just as balancing the provincial and federal budgets is an investment in our future, so is the education of our young people and other learners.

Recommendations for students. I suggest that students take advantage of cooperative education programs if they are available to them. Industry leaders concur that cooperative programs provide not only an academic "edge," but a competitive edge with prospective employers as well. While collecting the data for this study I was told that, "All other things being equal, I'd hire the student who went the co-op route over the one who didn't." Cooperative

programs have definite advantages for students which are well-documented in the literature.

Implications for theory. Since this was one of the first studies in Canada to look solely at the perspectives of business leaders with respect to the nature and intent of their involvement in cooperative education at a post-secondary level, any carefully planned and executed study in this topic area would be a valuable contribution to the literature. There is a significant amount of literature on school-business partnerships at the K to 12 levels; however, as a prototype study in this area, any research utilizing some permutation or combination of the variables included here would further our knowledge and understanding of business' perceptions of its involvement in education at the post-secondary level.

Further application of role theory to the analysis of business involvement in cooperative education is indicated by this study. The use of the term "role" should necessarily include the concepts of intent or motive as these terms indirectly, sometimes covertly, determine the role that is assumed by a participating member.

Implications for research. The following 11 suggestions are offered as ideas for further research into the area of the nature and intent of business involvement in cooperative education programs at the post-secondary level:

1. The replication of this study using leaders in industry from Western Canada.
2. The replication of this study using leaders in industry from other regions of Canada.
3. A comparative study using leaders in industry from two or more regions of Canada could be undertaken in an effort to determine if the

nature and intent of their involvements in cooperative education programs are similar.

4. Further study of this topic area could be conducted utilizing different research designs and methods.
5. A study of the opponents of business involvement in cooperative education programs at the post-secondary level.
6. A study of "new guard" industry leaders (those who are 40 years or younger) recently appointed to their positions, and their perceptions of cooperative education involvement.
7. A study of the impact a positive cooperative education experience had on educators and their perceptions about being involved with business.
8. A study of the role played by employers in cooperative education programs.
9. A study of "politician/advocate" roles which oppose business involvement in post-secondary education.
10. A study of "politician/advocate" roles which support business involvement in post-secondary education.
11. A study of successful and not-so-successful cooperative education initiatives, specifically those strategies which contributed to their success. (Newell, 1999, p.2)

Personal Reflections: Part One

It became apparent to me during the analysis of data that, while business representatives expressed a desire to become more involved in all aspects of the educational system, and wished to have more of a "voice" in the decisions

being made regarding education, they also cited time as a major constraint on such involvements. Would business representatives not recognize that to effect the massive changes and restructuring that they have proposed would necessarily involve extensive time and effort on the parts of everyone involved? To be an "equal partner" would require equal time and commitment to mutually agreed upon projects, plans, and goals by ALL parties to the process. Huge time commitments would necessarily ensue given the major changes business would like to see made within the education system. To be constrained by the one thing that would be most required, time, brings to mind the question of just how serious business is about being as involved in education as it purports.

The apparent differences between the perspectives of industrialists and educators with respect to the purpose of education are rooted in management and philosophical differences, as well as temporal differences. Educators believe education must necessarily be broad in scope and include a liberal education. Business, on the other hand, believes the purpose of education is to produce a trained workforce. This may explain the mutual skepticism and mistrust between educators and business individuals. Business is also concerned that education consists of too much "fluff," while educators are fearful of business gaining increased control of education and narrowing its focus. Finally, the time-frames within which each plans and operates are incongruent: business can frequently see the results of its transactions in a relatively short period of time; educators, however, may have to wait an entire generation to see the results of its efforts. These discontinuities in perspectives contribute to the tensions between business and education.

Personal Reflections: Part Two

"Our true age can be determined by
the ways in which we allow ourselves to play."
-- Louis Walsh

Five years and four months have passed since I commenced doctoral studies. While I inevitably got side-tracked by life on more than one occassion, allow me to confess to a certain sadness now that I have managed to "eat an elephant one bite at a time." It is with mixed emotions that I am now about to begin writing my personal reflections on the Ph.D. experience.

I suppose in some small measure I feel relief, that is, a relief from the unrelenting and unspoken pressures that an incomplete doctoral dissertation inflicts; I think of all the "memory" that has been "freed up" as a result of its completion -- to sleep without guilt will be a novel sensation. To a greater extent there is sadness -- a sadness that my "creation" has matured, and now it is time to leave the safety provided by its creator and be let loose into the arena of academic scrutiny. I also feel a sense of loss at having completed a dream that originated at the tender age of nine; I am lost to begin thinking about what new dream could possible match, if not beat, the dream of becoming "Dr. Sandy." With the promise of post-doctoral studies beckoning in my direction, the finality associated with the completion of this dissertation is somewhat abated.

Perhaps my sentiments can best be understood if one contemplates them within the context of the quotation provided at the outset of this section and, in particular, the meaning of the word "play:" because I so enjoy the rigors of study and writing, it does not feel like work to me. This is <u>not</u> to say that the successful completion of requirements for a Ph.D. is easy; it isn't. While formally completing the necessary requirements to become "Dr. Sandy," at a

subconscious level I was playing at what I most enjoyed, thereby tempering any frustrations or setbacks associated with its completion. Yes, there were moments of self-doubt, but their timing was predictable because not once did I seriously question my ability to complete what some came to regard as a "never-ending" undertaking. The completion of this dissertation was "mind candy" for me, although I appreciate that some might question my sanity at having put it this way.

While I learned a few things about myself in the process, the most important insight gleaned during the dissertation process was perhaps one of tolerance. By being required to remain as objective as humanly possible throughout this study, I believe I have become more tempered in my personal philosophies about "how the world ought to be," and therefore this study, ironically, had a calming effect on me. Who would have thought?

Finally, I want to again thank everyone involved in my becoming closer to self-actualization -- you have provided me with the confidence to use this study to launch myself into even more rigorous academic exercises. Many thanks to all of you.

Nosce te ipsum.

Veni, vidi, vici.

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